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# TRUTHS THAT SAVE

FRANK H. DECKER

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# TRUTHS THAT SAVE

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## CHURCH HOUSE TEXTS AND TALKS

By

REV. FRANK H. DECKER

Author of

*"Christ's Experience of God"*

THE PILGRIM PRESS

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No. 1.

TO THE FRIENDS WHOSE UNFAILING SYMPATHY AND HELP
HAVE MADE POSSIBLE THE BLESSED YEARS OF
CHURCH HOUSE MINISTRY AND TO
ALL MEN AND WOMEN
WHO HAVE BEEN
SAVED BY THE TRUTHS
HERE TAUGHT
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

# PREFACE

This volume is given to the public in answer to the request received from many quarters for an account of the remarkable work of the author at the Church House. The first ten chapters are essentially accurate reports of typical interviews between Mr. Decker and those whom he seeks to help. They show how one man deals personally with the victims of drink, the thief, the fallen woman, and others in moral trouble.

The remainder of the volume contains forty-two very brief addresses, such as Mr. Decker makes in his rescue mission. Many readers will be especially interested in this illustration of evangelistic zeal on the part of one who is "progressive" in theology and in the fact that his theology is, by demonstration, worthy of the title chosen for this volume, "Truths That Save."

Parris T. Farwell.

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# INTERVIEWS

# TRUTHS THAT SAVE

## I

## A TYPICAL INTERVIEW

She was sent to me by one of our leading physicians. Her mother's heart was broken, for her beautiful daughter's life seemed wrecked beyond all hope of repair, and she was still under the spell of the married man, the father of her dead infant child. The mother's efforts to get her daughter to tell her the truth had failed. When the child came to me I made a direct appeal to the Spirit of God in her heart. "He," I said, "tried to hold you back from your sin, didn't He? He sought to stop you after you had taken the first step, didn't He? And just now He wants you to give your life to Him for cleansing and regeneration, doesn't He? It would have been better if you had obeyed the voice of God in your mind. You would have escaped all this sin and shame if you had done so, and it would have been better for your poor, dear mother and father if you had listened to God." "O yes," she said,

"it would have been infinitely better if I had listened." "Well, He wants to save you and them from further wretchedness, for the future will be like the past, only worse, if you keep on the same path, don't you see that? And not only for you but for him whom you say you love. You owe it to him and to his wife and children to put an end to this thing. Write to him that you have given your life to God for pardon." And she did.

On our knees we sought the consecrating experience of God which she so desperately needed. As she left me I said, "Here are the sweetest words in the world for you. Listen! 'There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who walk according to the Spirit of God'—no condemnation of God or man or yourself. You have a fresh, new, white life from the Spirit of God and you will feel that you have it from this very moment." And my words proved true. On her mother's bosom she wept her tears of joyful repentance, and from her mother's lips received the assurance of a full reconciliation.

And then I sent for the man in the case. With a heart full of fear of the consequences of his sin, he came. My attitude toward him was one of deep compassion,

not contempt, but compassion. I knew that he was old enough to have known better, and that his training in Sunday school and church should have kept him from so sinning against a dear young life, but I knew also that he had been overtaken by a fault into which men unintentionally fall as the result of circumstances such as had exposed him to temptation.

I ventured to tell him the secrets of his soul—how the Spirit of God had struggled with him in the hour of his temptation and how surely he would have been saved from falling if he had listened to that still, small voice. "But," I said, "you were not on the rock foundation, by which I mean you did not have the interests of others, your wife and children, the girl and her parents, at heart, or you thought you could sin and not involve them in suffering. You did not fully realize that the relationship of husband and wife is the one that admits of no third person. There are other relationships of friendship that husband and wife may have, but the husband cannot share a love for his wife with another. We preachers make a mistake when we say that the more of love a man gives away the more of love he has left. The story of the widow's cruse of oil is not true either in

its literal or spiritual significance, for no one can fill an empty vessel from another vessel without finding that he has just so much less of oil in the one vessel as he has poured into the other. It is true that love for one's wife and friends grows as it is put into expression of word and deed, but it is also true that one has only a capacity for loving one woman in the relationship of wife—only one, I say. If he attempts to share the heart place of his wife with another, he will find that the relationship is killed. Your love for the second woman made you long to be free from your relationship with your wife. It made your whole life a lie, didn't it? I want you to see this thing as it is, for I know that if you see the truth concerning it, the truth will make you free from temptation to return to it." "I do see it," he said, "see it as I never saw it before." And then we prayed for him that he, too, might feel that he was cleansed from his sin and that he might claim the gracious assurance of freedom from temptation. "There is one thing more that you should do. Give me the money to pay the expense incurred by the poor girl because of your sin." And he is doing so as fast as he can.

I thought I had done with this case,

when my visit to the home of the girl told me of the girl's unhappy state because of her father's attitude toward the man who had wronged her. Her father's heart was filled with the spirit of murder. And so I sent for the father and this is what I said to him: "No one but God can enable you to pardon the man, and He cannot do so except as you see his sin in its true light. The truth concerning that sin will set you free from your hatred of the sinner. I know what you say, that for two years he has kept you and your wife in a hell of anxiety and pain and that it seems to you that every thought of him must fill your heart with fresh hate, but it need not be so. There is a way of escape from the terrible state of mind in which you are held captive. It is through the door of forgiveness for the man's sin. Your daughter has forgiven him, and your wife has done the same. Here are some thoughts that will help you to follow their example. First, you have been forgiven much, how much I do not know, neither do you. Go back in your life to your earliest recollection of boyhood and count up all the sins that you committed by which innocent hearts have suffered. Don't flinch from the full record as it begins to appear,

made evident by your memory, for it will help you mightily to forgive, to remember how much you have been forgiven, both by God and by those against whom you have sinned. And then consider the wrong you are now doing your innocent wife and your repentant child by your refusal to take them out of the tension of your hateful spirit."

"But he ought to suffer," he said.

"He has suffered and is now suffering beyond words to tell. His sin is ever before him. But for the help of God he would want to end his life. And then, lastly, you should be merciful toward the man because he was overcome by a sin into which men easily drift. Poor fellow! He went too near the rapids and was carried over. One more word. Your daughter has a fresh, new life in God in which all the stain of her sin has been washed away. She is as pure as though she had never sinned. She feels that she is, and you and all others coming in contact with her will feel the same."

And then we prayed that the Spirit of the eternal God might make it possible for the father to forgive the sin of the man who had wronged his daughter.

## II

## SAVED THROUGH LOVE FOR EACH OTHER AND THEIR CHILDREN

"You want work and a place to board till you get on your feet again? Is that all you want?" I asked. "If so, I have no interest in securing either for you, since if you continue in this habitual drinking, you will queer the job in a little while, and the money you earn will go for the most part to support the accursed saloon. Before we talk about getting you a job, or furnishing you a place to live, let's talk about the thing that has made you come to me, down and out—the thing that is back of all your trouble.

"It is not the drink, but hard luck? But you drink some, don't you? Yes, I thought so. Well, don't be afraid to look into your soul and see the truth. Have you courage enough to do that? It takes a very brave man to do it. Can you look into your mind and not dodge the truth that is waiting to look you in the face there? It will help you to do so to know that I don't want to corner you up about your drinking except for the one reason—that I want to help you to escape from continuing in it.

"Now, tell me, where would you be if you had never touched a drop of drink, and where would your wife and children be? You would not be here, and they would not be in another city, dependent upon charity for the bread which you should have furnished them.

"Wake up and think about this thing. You are mentally asleep, and God cannot save a man in that condition. Can you be saved from the power of drink? Certainly, and at once. If you do what I tell you now, you will conquer it from this hour. If I were to put water in a boiler and keep a fire burning under it, the water would generate steam that properly applied would make the machinery go. You can understand that, can't you? Well, then, you ought to be able to understand my meaning when I tell you that if I fill your mind with certain thoughts and you meditate upon them, they will generate in your mind a power that will strengthen your will, so that you can go by the saloon with all of its frightful temptations. Let me put the water in the boiler, and you keep the fire of meditation burning until the steam is generating, and the thing will be done."

And then I made him see and feel his sin of drinking at the expense of breaking up

his family, with the fearful results to his wife and children. Six years ago he was saved, but his wife was not. After they were brought together she continued drinking. Her will power seemed utterly insufficient to conquer the drink habit. But a talk in which I made her realize what the results of her drinking would mean if it continued brought to her such hate and fear of the evil that she has never touched the drink since. Only the other night she said to me, "I would die before I would touch it again." Now they have a happy home and their children have a chance.

## III

## SAVED BY LOVE-INSPIRED HOPE

She came from the district court, where she had often been before, and her appearance indicated her wretched bondage to drink and another evil. Like the woman of the text she had been taken in the act, for which the penalty was imprisonment; but the court had put her on probation and sent her to me that she might have another chance.

"Will you think a little of what I want to say to you, for I can tell you something

that will do you a lot of good. See this handkerchief. It was soiled and blood-stained, but it is not so now, is it? It is just as clean as if it had never been soiled. So it can be with you. You can be as pure as you were before you fell, so that you will feel so, and others who are pure will feel that you are pure. Don't mind what they tell you about the bird with the broken wing. That story is absolutely false in every respect; for the broken wing, after it is mended, is strongest in that exact place where it was broken, and the same is true of the broken will, the broken motive, the broken word, the broken character. You can get back all you have lost, of light out of your conscience, of love out of your heart, of power out of your will. God never lets any of His children get so far away that He can't bring them home. He never lets any one of them so damage himself that he can't be made perfectly whole. He never allows one so to pollute himself that he can't be made whiter than snow. Wouldn't you like to walk the streets of Providence, a first-class Christian lady, with self-respect, and compelling the respect of those who now look down upon you? Well, you can be such a lady and I will show you how."

And she put herself in my care, that I might make good my promise to her. Her motive is converted and therefore she is approved of God. She is now a wife, and the perfecting work of God's grace is going on in her life.

## IV

## TALK TO A THIEF

"I want to make you feel that you don't want to steal—because it is folly to steal, not because your recent experience in jail makes you feel that if you steal again you will be found out and sent back there again. But you were foolish, misguided. You wanted to get something for nothing—something that belonged to another because he had earned it. You robbed another man of the fruit of his toil. It took him weeks of hard and patient labor to earn what you took from him without giving him anything in return. This was your fatal mistake,—you thought you could get as much out of a stolen dollar as out of one that had been properly earned, but you found out that you were mistaken. You had mighty little satisfaction in spending the stolen money, most of which went for drink.

"It is how a man gets a thing that decides what he will get out of it. If he gains it honestly, as the result of proper toil, he will so use it as to get something valuable out of it. I want you to see this so that you shall not be again tempted to think that the dollar stolen is just the same as the dollar earned. That is the fatal mistake of the thief. Nothing that a man gets, for which he gives no return, is of any possible value to him.

"How much does the idle rich man get out of his inherited money which he spends selfishly, without thought of enriching those to whom it goes? I tell you he doesn't get as much pleasure and profit out of a million dollars as an honest producer gets out of a week's wage. Next time you are tempted to steal, I want you to remember that I told you that you couldn't get anything out of whatever is gained in that way. Think of how much more you have robbed from yourself than you robbed from others. You stole a few dollars, and as the result you have forfeited your name as an honest man and are branded as a thief.

"If now you are to have a chance to earn an honest dollar, it must be because some of us believe that you now intend to live an honest life. Don't forget that a single act

of dishonesty makes one a dishonest man, and no one wants to trust or employ a man known to be dishonest. It seems to me that I have told you the one thing that will protect you from yielding to temptation to steal again, that you will not yield to the temptation as you formerly yielded to it, now that you know that you can't possibly get anything in that way which is worth while. I think you will choose to earn every dollar hereafter, that you may have enjoyment in earning it and enjoyment in spending it, as you realize that both in earning and spending you are rendering a valuable service to those around you."

## V

## WHERE SHE FOUND GOD

"God is up in heaven and He doesn't care for anybody but Himself, but you are right here where I can get at you, and you are willing to help poor people like me, and so I have come to you." These are the words of an Italian woman who came to me recently. She was up to her eyes in trouble. She had had fifteen children, seven of whom had died, and she was living

with the eight and her husband, trying to keep soul and body together out of his earnings of $8.00 per week. When she came to me she was about to be put in jail because of her inability to pay damages in a suit for slander which she had permitted to go against her by default. Altogether, her case was maddening and I did not wonder that she thought God was up in heaven and cared for nobody but Himself, and that He was so far away and so indifferent to her welfare that she had no hope whatever of any help from Him. Multitudes who would not use her words, who are shocked at them as they read them here, nevertheless feel toward God about as she did, only they praise Him with their lips while they disbelieve in Him in their hearts.

After I had saved this woman from going to jail and helped her in other material ways, I said to her, "There is a reservoir of water up on the east side and it is all fenced in so that no one can get at it. It seems to care for nothing but itself, but in your house there is a faucet to which you can go at any time and get the water you need. You praise the faucet, and condemn the reservoir! You thank the faucet, but have no gratitude for the reservoir, until

you find out that very drop of water that has come through the faucet came from the reservoir. When you find this out, you say, 'I am thankful to both faucet and reservoir, to the reservoir for sending the water, and to the faucet for giving it to me.' " "Oh," she said, "I know what you mean. I thought of it last night when I was going home. You mean you are the faucet and God is the reservoir; that He puts it into your heart to help me." "Yes," I said, "thank God you have come to understand the exact truth, and now you will be thankful, not so much to me as to God, who through me has granted you a little of the more abundant help that He longs to give. And remember this—that others should find the spirit of God in you, as you say you have found His spirit in me. For God's spirit is in you and in all men."

## VI

## BELIEVING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

God's greatness affects the mind much as the sun at noon-day affects the naked eye. If a seed, knowing its dependence upon the sun, should say, "The sun is so

far away that I may not get to it or if I could approach it its greatness would wither me in an instant," the seed would need to be told that the spirit of the sun is all that it requires for its development and that that spirit is just where the seed is within the seed itself. So you will find in God's Spirit all that you need of God, all that you have of capacity for His wisdom and truth and love. An attempt to measure His greatness will not help you. Neither will any mental effort on your part profit you if you attempt to understand a Being without beginning of days or limitations of life. What you need is simply to recognize the presence of God's Spirit in your own soul and in the souls of others. God knows how much you need of Him, and He has so given Himself to you in His spirit that you are not blinded by His light, or deafened by His still small voice.

"But," a young University man said to me, "I want to know who made God, whose Spirit you say is in me. Where did He come from? Unless you can answer that question, I shall not believe that He is here."

"You will not believe that He is here," I replied, "unless you can understand how He got here? You do not talk that way

about other things you know are here, whose origin you cannot for a moment explain. How did the material world get here? Go back as fast and as far as you can, until you reach the final atom, or molecule, or force, and then account for that. Or, if you go back of the force to mind, you have simply gone around the circle and are just where you started when you set out to find out how the world got here. You do not know how it got here, but you know it is here. And so with your own personal existence. Leaving out God, how do you account for that? If you say you will not believe that you are here until you understand how you got here, you will never believe that you are here; but you are here, and the world is here and God is here. Do not bother your mind with further questions as to who made God, but simply recognize His presence and take advantage of His fellowship, through which you may be transformed into His image, and as your capacity for Him increases, many things that you cannot now hope to understand will be made plain."

## VII

## VALUED BECAUSE VALUABLE

"No," I said to him, "men will not take a nickel for a quarter, or a quarter for a dollar. They will not take lead for brass, or brass for silver, or silver for gold. The counterfeit is soon discovered and rejected and the counterfeiter does not long escape detection and punishment. If you are to be valued for any length of time you will have to make yourself valuable. You don't seem to have understood this, since you have never been able to induce your employer to value your service sufficiently to wish to retain you in his employ. Oh, yes, I know your excuse, that you have never been appreciated, that you have never had a fair chance. I have made some inquiries of your employers and have learned that what I suspected is the truth. While you did some good work at times, you cheapened yourself by certain things which I want to point out. No, don't be angry, don't go, for I am your friend, having your interests at heart. I want you to see what it is that decreases your value, so that you may, by correcting it, make yourself of such value as you wish to be taken for.

I think you will recognize the truth that drink and dishonesty and untruthfulness and laziness cheapen you, that they take a piece of gold and turn it into a piece of dirt, and that if you are to be valued, you must overcome these things. They can be overcome and the first step toward overcoming them is in seeing them as they are, for when you do that, you will repent of them as you must, and gladly substitute for them the virtues which they contradict. Don't be a piece of lead when you can be a piece of gold. Don't make yourself worthless when you can be valuable. Then you will be valued because of the valuable service you render. God will help you to overcome the things that cheapen you, when you see how valueless they are."

## VIII

## SAVED THROUGH LOVE FOR A MOTHER

"You can't make a wrong thing go right long; you may say that it is right and others may say the same thing, but it will not go right long. But you can make a wrong thing right, so that it will go right,

just the same as though it had never been wrong, even though it may have been wrong for fifty years. If, therefore, we really have your welfare at heart and want to get you a right life, we shall do all in our power to have you see what is wrong in you and correct it. Unless we do that, all of our efforts to help you will utterly fail, for I tell you again, the Church House does not know any way to make any wrong thing go right long.

"Find out what is wrong in you and make it right. That is what you would do if you were dealing with a clock, or anything else, but that is the last thing that you think of doing with reference to your life. Most men who come here are, in the main, right, but their lives are rendered valueless by some one wrong thing which they overlook, or refuse to correct. What is the value of a watch of the best materials and with mechanism which is all right—except one broken spring? Unless that is mended, the watch might just as well be thrown away. Valuable as you would be but for your habitual drinking, that makes you absolutely valueless, both to yourself and to others with whom you are related. If you are not to be rescued from it, you might just as well put a millstone round

your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea. These are words of Christ and they seem cruel, but nevertheless, they are words of truth, since there is absolutely no use in perpetuating and multiplying a valueless life, and habitual drunkenness renders the most precious life worthless.

"You want a steady job and don't see that an unsteady man can never have a steady job. I can give you just such a job now, if you could only be depended upon to fill it as you could and would but for that drink habit. That job would enable you to help support that aged and beautiful-souled mother across the sea, filling her heart with joy instead of pain.

"But it is no use. She must suffer on because you can't be depended upon to let go of the drink. You have taken cures in your efforts to escape from drink, but in vain. There is one thing you haven't taken, and that is the reason why you have not succeeded in your efforts to overcome your habit. You haven't taken a new motive, but in each case when you have attempted to reform, you have acted upon the same unchanged motive of selfishness. I could change your life if I could change your motive. If, for the sake of that mother across the sea, you would ask God

to fill your heart with His Spirit of love,—in the strength of that motive you would have power to escape from the drink evil. Try it and see. Fill your mind with thoughts of mother and of what it will mean if you take the pain out of her heart, filling it with joy. Think, I say, and keep on thinking until the thought of supporting and comforting your mother gets its hold upon you, exercises its influence upon you, and then think of what it will mean to the men around you if they see you conquer that which is ruining them."

With such words and others that I cannot here report, I made my appeal to this man to change his motive.

"I shall never drink again," he said. That was over six years ago, and he has kept his word, with the result that he has been the joy of his mother, whom he has twice visited in her English home.

## IX

## IS MY DEAD FATHER STILL ALIVE?

"Life hasn't been worth much to me since father died," a Jewish girl said to me recently. "What a cruel thing it

was to leave me with a broken heart as my father's death has left me!"

"But your father is not dead," I said. "Neither has death so changed him that he must needs mean less to you than he meant when he was here."

"I wish I could believe what you say," she replied, "but it doesn't seem true. If it is true that my father is living, why doesn't he come back and make me realize his presence? No one ever has come back from death. How, then, can we know that the dead are still living? What makes you think my father is alive?" she asked.

"Well," I replied, "the belief that death does not end all is here and is held by all classes of men, educated and uneducated, cultured and uncultured, from the wild man roaming the plains to the world-famed scientist. The Christian believes that one man returned to the world after death and made himself known to his friends, and countless millions have based their faith of man's immortality upon the testimony of these men that they saw Jesus risen from the dead. My faith that the dead are living does not get its support from the story of the resurrection of Jesus. It rests upon other grounds. I think I have in myself the proof of my immortality. I find there

a deathless spirit in me, a spirit that does not grow old. Of that I am certain, and there are things in me that are meaningless if I am to pass out of existence at death.

"If we could enter a shell and speak to the bird about to break through into the outer world, and tell it of the world so very near and yet so unseen, the bird might not be able to credit our teaching concerning that near but unseen world. How, then, should we be able to convince it of the truth of our statements? It seems to me that I should call the bird's attention to some things in itself that mean the existence of a world immediately outside the shell.

"What's the meaning of these wings if there is not a world where they can be used, and what is the significance of these eyes if there isn't light beyond the shell in which you are enclosed? And what possible use can there ever be for these feet if there isn't ground upon which they shall stand and walk?

"The bird would find in itself—in its eyes, and its wings, and its feet, conclusive proof of the existence of an unseen world, without which these parts of itself could have no possible meaning.

"So we find in ourselves capacities, quali-

ties that are sufficient proof of the life beyond the grave, since these things are meaningless if such a life does not exist. That the finest things in our souls are to be unfulfilled, that they are begun and then denied completion, is an incredible thought; it is a denial of the existence of God and the rationality of the universe.

"The more valuable a thing is, the more certain we are that it will not be destroyed. We cannot have any faith in the endless continuance of the worthless, but we feel that a thing that is becoming increasingly valuable must go on. It is on this ground, I am sure, that we base our faith in the continuance after death of the life of Jesus Christ. Men simply had to believe that such a life would not terminate on the cross. Our faith in the resurrection of Jesus does not rest so much upon the testimony of those who say they saw him alive from the dead as upon the feeling in our very souls that a life so rich, so valuable, so serviceable, could not possibly be treated as worthless. One who believes himself to be a son of God will believe that he has eternal life, and no one who believes that he is being perfected will believe that that process will stop short of perfection, and certainly no one will credit the idea that

when once he is perfected, he will be destroyed. The simple truth is that as a man enriches his life and makes it increasingly worthy of continuance, he will have in his soul the feeling of its deathlessness.

"So fine a spirit,
Daring yet serene—
He may not surely lapse from what has been,
Greater, not less, his wandering mind must be;
Ampler the splendid vision he must see—
'Tis unbelievable he fades away—
An exhalation at the dawn of day.
Nor dare we dream that he has been returned
Into the Oversoul, to be discerned
Hereafter in the bosom of the rose,
In petals of the lily, or in those
Far-jewelled sunset
Skies that glow and pale
Or in the rich note of the nightingale.
Nay, tho all beauty may recall to mind
What we in his fair life were wont to find
He shall escape absorption, and shall still
Preserve a faculty to know and will
From our small limits all witholding, free,
Somewhere he dwells and keeps high company
Yet tainted not with so supreme a bliss
As to forget he knew a world like this."

## X

## "THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

His wife came with a heart broken with grief. Her eyes were full of tears as she said:

"He was a perfect husband until this girl came into our home a few weeks ago. For many years we had lived in each other's love without the slightest sign that any one would come between us. Three dear children had come, each of them binding us closer together, but now he says that this other one has taken my place so that he cannot longer live with me. I have reasoned with him, urging the interest of our children as a supreme reason why he should overcome this infatuation. But all is in vain. He seems held by a power greater than his own, against which his will counts for nothing. Is there anything you can do to save him and us? His mother, brother, and others have done their best, but failed."

"Yes," I replied, "there is something I can do that others have not tried. I know a way to make your husband free from the bondage of evil in which he is held, for the

thing that holds him is error, and the thing that can free him is truth, and the exact truth needed to change his mind I know. I will get in touch with him and with the girl at the earliest possible moment."

I sent my visitor for the girl and she brought the man with her. I took him first, and when we were alone, I said:

"I want you to know that I have no stones to throw at you. I want simply to have you see the truth, just the truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning this affair between you and the woman in the other room. I shall do my very best to help you to see it. I know that she is younger and fairer than your wife and that she seems to you infinitely more attractive. But her attraction is not moral or spiritual, but wholly physical. Nevertheless it is all-powerful with you. You do not see the truth about her and about your wife. Neither appears in the right light. I want you to know the truth concerning them. The truth about the girl is that she is so fearfully selfish that to please herself, not you, she has consented for weeks to see your wife and mother and others who love you suffering the tortures of hell. Their tears have not affected her own sinful pleasure. She has been willing to gratify her own

selfish desire for you at the expense of breaking the heart of your faithful wife and of leading you to give a damning example to your children. In a word, she has not considered their most sacred interests, but has been ready to consent to rob them of all that they have a right to find in you.

"Look at her in the light of the truth concerning her and the truth will make you free from this mad passion for her. And then look at your wife. See the truth concerning her. You admit that she has been true to her marriage covenant with you. Face the facts concerning her motherhood of your children, and all that it has meant of suffering both for her and for them. Consider her love revealed in the years of her faithful toil for her family. You say she has faults of disposition. Know the truth as to your responsibility for developing these faults. How largely are they the result of your cruel neglect of her? Know the truth about your own faults before you say anything more about hers. Take the beam out of your own eye before you call attention to what may be a mote in her eye.

"Your mind is changing concerning these two women? You are beginning to

see them in their right light? They do not look to you as they did before we began this talk? Well, then, let me tell you a little more of the truth that will make you free from the power of this sinful attraction.

"She does not love you or she would have your welfare at heart. For she knows that your welfare can be secured only as you promote the welfare of your wife and children. And she knows also that she is tempting you to destroy your welfare and their welfare. She is sacrificing you as well as them. It is a lie that she loves you; and the same is true of your profession of love for her. I know you have not regarded it as a lie. I know that even now you do not see it in the light in which I present it. But it is nevertheless the truth that you are as selfish in your attitude towards this woman, whom you say you love, as you are in your attitude toward your wife and your children. You do not love her any more than you love them. What you call love for her is nothing more or less than blind love for yourself. You deny this? Well, I will prove that I am right.

"Have you her interests at heart in the course you are tempting her to pursue?

What is it in her that you love? Tell me that. Not her purity of body or soul, since you propose to cast both away. Not any beauty of character, since this you are destroying. You cannot say that you have her interests at heart or that you are proposing a course that would promote her welfare. If you had, you would not consent that she live an unholy life with you, a life in which she must practice falsehood and deceit, a life in which she must speak and act a continual lie, a life into which no child can come except as a bastard. No, do not shrink from the truth, for the truth only can make you free.

"You tell her that Heaven meant you for each other, that your marriage to another was a mistake which you should not perpetuate; and she, poor foolish girl, half believes your story true. You know how false it is. You know that you could transfer your sinful affection to another and then to another and so on without end. Such love as yours has no enduring quality in it. It has no personal loyalty in it. It is a house on the sand; it may be overturned by any wind that blows. I tell you that yielding to this one sensual temptation will mean that your whole sensual nature will be strengthened, with the in-

evitable result of the weakening of your power of resisting it."

"Talk with her," he said, "for I shall need her help to end this thing."

The truth had commenced to make him free. Vision of sin had brought volition to escape it.

It is hardly necessary that I write all that I said to her, as I sought to deliver her from the bondage of error. It is enough that I made her realize the utter selfishness of his seeming love for her and of her love for him.

"If," I said, "he had such love for you, he would have your welfare at heart. Well he knows that the course he wants you to take will make you a harlot, and that it will mean the contradiction of all the holy aspirations of your soul; that it will unfit you to be the wife of a true man, that that sacred name, wife, with the still more sacred name, mother, with which it should be connected, will be denied you. He knows that in the life he wishes you to share with him, you will have no peace with God, but a continual sense of His disapproval. And not only this, but he knows that the thought of your mother, which has been for you a source of pleasure, will be turned into a source of pain. You will

want to take her picture from your desk. If he loved you he would guard you against the life into which he is tempting you to enter. He is a serpent robed as an angel of light, and you are the same to him, though neither of you has so regarded yourself.

"I want you to know that truth concerning the experience that awaits you, if you resist the appeals that God's spirit, through his truth, is making to you. Your sin against the innocent wife and her children will embitter your heart and make it impossible for you to live in peace with the man of your sinful infatuation. Your selfish motive in coming together will create a hell for you while you are together and will then drive you apart. Have I made you see the truth of this thing? Do you understand that you cannot retain the love of a man after he has ceased to *respect* you?

"Go," she said to him, "to your wife and children and let me go to the pure life which I now choose to live."

Next morning I heard his wife's voice over the telephone, saying:

"He is so changed! He is like his own dear self again. Thank God the truth has made him free."

In each case I had appealed to the spirit of God of whose presence both confessed they had been painfully conscious. "He who would have kept you out of sin," I said, "will now lead you out of it. Follow Him."

ADDRESSES IN CHURCH HOUSE

## ADDRESSES IN CHURCH HOUSE

### I

### TRUTHS THAT SAVE

The one thing necessary is to know the truth about the thing that tempts, for that truth only has power to save from the temptation. "If the truth shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Truth is the only foundation upon which love can build a house that will not fall when the winds blow and the rains descend and the floods beat upon it.

Love without truth is blind to the evils by which men are tempted; a man may be blind to the injury to those he loves wrought by his words and deeds. Love has moral vision only as it looks through the eyes of truth. An illustration comes to mind in the case of a young man who loved his mother, though his drinking habit was her daily torture. For years he continued in his life of intemperance solely because he did not realize the truth of what he was making her suffer. When I opened his eyes to that truth his heart melted, and he abandoned his sin, from which he has now

been free for many years. The love that is to save will have to work by the method of truth, not the truth concerning some theological dogma, but the truth concerning the sin from which the man is to be saved.

Therefore, I say that if you would not enter into temptation you must know the truth about the thing that tempts you, for all evil is rooted in error and error is rooted in littleness of mind. Here is the only explanation of evil that satisfies me. God did not make man evil, but He did make him little, and man's littleness involved him in error, the seed of evil. "For the creature was made subject to vanity (error) not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Romans 8:20.) How very simple that is. And how surely it suggests that truth is the one way out of evil. How wonderfully does Jesus employ and teach this method in His work of recovering men from the evils and errors of their lives! He has no hope of saving men from evil who will not let go of their errors. He seeks to save men by filling their minds with the truths which correct their errors.

He, therefore, who is tempted to sin must seek salvation through the truth. Take the evil of *covetousness,* out of which

all other evils come. What is Jesus' way of escape from it? Listen. "Beware of covetousness for a man's life *does not consist* in the abundance of the things he possesses." Here error and its evil are clearly pointed out. The error that lies at the root of covetousness is that a man's life *does* consist in the abundance of things. It is because men think that their lives *do* consist in the abundance of things, that they are covetous for large possessions. What they want is an abundant life—abundance of pleasure, of rest, of peace, of joy, and it is because they feel that they can have such abundance of life only as they have abundance of money that they covet large possessions. But abundance of money does not mean abundance of life. It is very difficult for the man of wealth to reveal a wealth of love through the use of money. "She hath given more than them all, for she hath given her living, while they have given of their abundance." For an abundant life one needs only an abundant love and abundant opportunities to manifest it. Without an abundance of money one can have an abundance of opportunity to express an abundant love. One feels great pity for the selfish rich, for it is easier for a camel to pass through

the eye of a needle than for them to get any return of love from those to whom their costless gifts go. A million-dollar gift from a Rockefeller does not provoke as much real gratitude as the gift of a dollar from one of his poorly paid employees. If a rich man's children love him, it is not because of his riches. If he denies them all they want, so as to promote their real interests, the chances are that they will not see and consent to his motive, with the result that their hearts will harden against him. The rich man has a far harder time to develop the souls of his sons and daughters than the poor man has, and the attitude of the world towards the rich man is one of envy, jealousy and ill will. All this has a tendency to mar the character of the rich man. The love of money grows upon him with the inevitable result of the loss of his love for men. The more money he has the more he wants, and, as his possessions increase, his love for men decreases. It is impossible that the love of God should grow in the soul of a man who sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him. One cannot serve God and Mammon. To know the truth about covetousness, as Jesus declares it when He says, "Beware of covetousness

because a man's life consists not of the abundance of the things he possesses," is to be saved from it.

To know the truth about *falsehood* is to be saved from it. "Let your 'Yea' be Yea and your 'Nay' Nay, for whatsoever is more or less than these cometh of evil." If we practice falsehood, it is because we do not believe this truth concerning it. We are tempted to justify falsehood on the ground that it is a necessity of life. The physician, the lawyer, the preacher, the merchant, men in all walks of life and in all social relationships, are fearful of trusting truth as a method of life. The world, however, is rapidly coming to recognize the fact that truth and love are not in conflict, but in perfect agreement, and that one who would advance the real interests of men should never hesitate a moment to use the method of truth. I know all that is said by good people in justification of practicing deception, when it only seems available for the protection of the life or honor of an innocent soul. Dr. Richard C. Cabot says: "I will sum up the results of my experiments with truth and falsehood by saying that I have not yet found a case in which a lie does not do more harm than good, and by expressing my belief that if

any one will carefully repeat the experiments he will reach similar results. The technic of truth telling is perhaps more difficult than the technic of lying, but results make it worth acquiring." The man who is resolved never to resort to falsehood to conceal anything that he may do is protected from yielding to temptations by which otherwise he would be overcome. In most cases the sinner expects to hide his sin under the cover of deception. To practice deception concerning any good thing which we may have said or done in order to escape the disfavor of evil men is as great a sin as to attempt to deceive good people about our evil deeds. Whatever suffering may come from our perfect sincerity will prove a gain both to us and to all others who may be involved in it. Jesus is right, that only evil can come from the practice of falsehood.

When a man is tempted to *steal* that which is another's, or to get in a dishonest way that which belongs to him, Jesus' cure for this evil is the truth—

1. That no gain can possibly compensate for loss of character;
2. That one who puts character first, not consenting to the use of a wrong method in attempting to secure a

right thing, will find his needs provided for.

A good conscience, a pure heart, a noble spirit with fellowship with God,—a man need not sacrifice these in order to secure any needed material things. Let him fulfill every character requirement, and all these things will be added unto him.

When a man is tempted to commit the sin of *adultery* what shall he do? What is the shield of protection against this peril? What is the truth that will save a man from yielding to it? "If your right eye offend you," Jesus says, "pluck it out." That is not an easy thing to do. One who is to practice obedience to such a commandment will have to be nerved for a very great effort. I fear we do not know the power of this evil, as it appeals to men over whom it has gained a power which in their own strength they are unable to overcome. Countless thousands are held in captivity by it, though they pray that they may escape from it. Jesus distinctly declares the method of truth as the only one by which they may be saved. The truth that saves from this evil is the truth concerning the evil itself. Let its victim see it as it is. Let him know the truth concerning the effect its indulgence must have upon

his mind and character and body and soul, and through him upon those who sin with him. Jesus puts this whole thing definitely: "It is profitable for you to pluck out your eye *rather* than that your whole body be cast into hell." In other words, it will give you strength to do this exceedingly difficult thing to remember what it is going to mean to you if you don't do it. Know what the penalty of continuance in this sin is certain to be if you would have power to escape from it. Judge it by its certain results, as you have experienced them, or as you have seen them in their frightfulness in the lives of others. Consider what it must mean to you and to that other one involved if you go on in this sinful indulgence. Consider what Jesus says it will ultimately mean to you, if you don't escape from it, and you will have power sufficient to let go of it.

I passed a man recently whom I knew a few years ago, and I hardly recognized him, so terribly had this sin changed his appearance. Before he fell into it he was a man of spiritual countenance, a good husband and loving father. Now his evasive, sensual countenance, his unreliable word, his bitter hypocrisy are some of the signs of moral wreckage that the sin of impurity

has wrought in his life, and there are worse results, results so fearful that no one, knowing them, would ever take the chance of inflicting or experiencing them. There is no other evil of which it is so hard for man to escape the results of indulgence. Years after one has repented and utterly forsaken an impure life, a dear child may be born of the holy wedlock into which the redeemed man has ventured, and, to his unspeakable horror, he sees in that child's deformed body or mind the results of the sin of impurity, committed in his life before his marriage. The penalty attached to the sin of uncleanness seems excessive only because we do not see how sacredly the marriage relationship must be guarded, if it is to mean the birth of healthy, happy, holy children. It is the penalty of corrupting life at its source. No wonder the penalty for this sin is great, for there can be no greater sin. It is a sin in which a man and woman conspire to defeat the highest and holiest will of God. God has rightly done all in his power to prevent men and women from yielding to the temptation to commit this sin. To know the truth concerning this evil is to be saved from it.

To know the truth about *drink* will also save men from the temptation. It is a

mighty temptation. Its power is overwhelming in millions of cases that stagger through life into drunkards' graves. Is there a truth that can prevent men from forming the habit, and save those who have become drunkards? We are just beginning to learn the truth about alcoholic stimulation. The falsehoods concerning it are being corrected. We no longer speak of alcohol as good for food, or as a necessary medicine. Now we know that it is neither. Physicians bear witness that it has no value as a medicine. The truth concerning its excessive use we all know, how it means the utter ruin of manhood, body and soul, and how it destroys the harmony of all relationships in which the drunkard attempts to live. We need also to know the truth of the perils of drunkenness to the moderate drinker, and not only to him, but through him to others with whom he is associated. The reason that the tide of prohibition is rising on all sides is because the truth concerning the liquor traffic is coming to be known. That truth will save the world from it.

When you are tempted to *gamble* know the truth concerning the thing by which you are tempted. Your motive is to get something for nothing. You are willing

that another should lose in order that you may win. There is a strong fascination about gambling as there is about every other evil thing, and it grows upon a man as he practices it, until he becomes its victim, in which case he is utterly ruined.

We may be at a loss to account for the moral deterioration of the gambler until we remember that gambling is the practical denial of the very spirit of God, since it is the gambler's aim to get without giving, to be served without serving. The game in which one cannot find sufficient interest without the added stimulant of gambling is one in which it will not pay a man to indulge. The truth about gambling is that it is the very soul of covetousness, which contradicts all that is divine in man. Look at the gambler, and you will shun gambling. The truth about this evil if you frankly face it will be sufficient protection to you from entering into it.

The *lazy* man needs to be made to face the truth concerning his sin. Jesus tells us the saving truth concerning it. He makes laziness a sin. "Thou wicked and slothful servant," Jesus said to a man who was too lazy to follow the example of those other servants who had so traded with their lord's money as to increase it. The excuse

of this lazy man was not accepted by Jesus. Rather He pointed out how empty and false it was. "You said the job I gave you was hard, that I required a service of you you did not feel you could undertake, and still you want the reward of those who have worked while you loafed. Without doing your part you want to share the product of their toil, and you thought that you could secure it. Just the reverse is the truth. Loss of what you have instead of increase of it is the penalty of your refusal to use what you have in the interests of others." Let the lazy man be made to see the truth regarding the unprofitableness of his laziness. Let him be made to see how contemptible his sin is in the attitude of contempt for him that earnest men manifest. Tell him that there is no heaven here nor hereafter for the shirk. What a specimen of deteriorated manhood he is. How his presence is shunned. What a discordant note he is in any relationship in which he is placed. What a fool he is to think he can make the time fly by keeping his eye on the clock. Let him know that if he would make a ten-hour day a six-hour day, he may do so by putting double thought into his work, and that he might get so absorbed in it that the time would seem no longer. The cure

of laziness is in the blessed truth taught by Jesus that it is more blessed to serve than to be served. The burden of hard labor grows easy when it is done with the right motive.

Is *pride* the temptation? If so, show what it is and what it does, especially how it destroys the most precious thing on earth, fellowship both with God and man, for nothing more surely does that than pride. A certain man went up to the temple to pray who said, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." Another man by his side would not so much as lift up his eyes, but smote himself on the breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The humble soul learned the truth of fellowship with God and man, while the proud soul lost both. Pride arouses contempt, or at best pity, in the souls of those who see it. The proud man wants to be praised and prized above others, but his pride defeats his purpose. Learn how noble humility is, and how surely it is blessed by God and man. A proud man is sure to be a blind man. Jesus speaks of him as such, "Thou blind Pharisee." The man who thinks he has need of nothing does not know that he is in need of everything. "Happy are the poor in spirit for theirs

is the Kingdom of God." If the proud man could be made to see what an unsightly thing, what a burdensome thing, what an offensive thing pride is in the sight of God and man, he would put it away.

When you are tempted to *hate* any one, know the truth by which only you can be saved from such temptation. You cannot possibly hate a man without desiring to harm him. Hate wills evil to the one hated. Hate wants to strike for the sole purpose of paining, never for the purpose of taking away evil. Hate is always vindictive, never remedial. Therefore Jesus says that hate is murder. He who hates wants to injure, or to have some injury come upon his enemy—injury to his name or his friendships or his joy. God never hates those whom He afflicts. He never punishes for His own pleasure, but for our profit. Very wretched is the soul in whom hate dwells. He who wishes another to suffer anything except for his own good hates him, and we are never to hate any one, however much he hates us or those whom we love.

Are you tempted to be *angry* with any one? If so, remember that, while Jesus never hated any one, He was angry with many, very angry. He was angry with those who wronged any one, but his anger

was always right. We need here to distinguish very clearly between *anger* and *hate*. One is consistent with love, while the other is its denial. One seeks to injure. The other seeks to help. To be angry with a man may be helpful for him, if he sees that the anger does not mean hate of him, and there can be anger without a vestige of hate or ill will.

"And looking round on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their heart," are words written of Jesus. Mark III. 5. "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" is His own Statement.

And again: "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your anger, neither give room to the devil." Ephesians IV. 26. Righteous wrath or indignation is consistent with love, since it is an expression of disapproval of that which needs to be corrected. Without it some sins can never be seen or cured. It is necessary to make a man thoroughly hate and forsake his sin. It is taking towards another's fault the attitude that he himself must take towards it in order to be saved from it. One may be angry and sin not, if one keeps hate out of his anger. The mo-

ment that hate comes into the anger it becomes sinful and harmful. The anger that Jesus condemns is the anger that has no cause. To be angry without cause is to take an unjust attitude towards a man. How easily we fall into this sin! How careful we must be to escape it! One will have to watch and pray earnestly if he is not to enter into this temptation, to be angry without cause. In all the relationships of life we are in daily peril of being angry where there is no cause, and for that reason our anger can only be harmful to ourselves, and to those against whom it is expressed. I know of no temptation against which we should be so thoroughly and earnestly and prayerfully on our guard as being angry without cause. Nothing but love can protect us from this deadly evil. We need to see the truth about this evil in order to escape from it. Jesus said, "The man who is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment," that is, he commits a sin that cannot be lightly passed over. He should judge himself concerning it. It is most important that we express our disapproval of evil wherever we find it, but we must be careful that it is evil. We are never to appear to approve what in our hearts we condemn. We must

not smile upon any form of iniquity. Neither should we withhold our approval of any good thing. This is most important, far more important than we have imagined. We must see that we have cause for our anger, and we must be sure that it never gets to be ill will. We must never be angry with a repentant sinner. Here is the difference between the father and the elder brother of the prodigal son. The elder brother is angry with the prodigal at a time when his anger is not justified, since his brother has forsaken his sin. We have no right to be angry with a man who is doing his best to overcome his faults. Moreover, let us be sure our anger is sincere by making certain that we are angry at those things in ourselves which arouse our anger toward our brother. "Slow to anger and plenteous in mercy" is the true spirit.

When you are tempted to be *jealous,* to be angry that another should be loved as you are, know the truth about the thing that tempts you. Know that it is rooted and grounded in selfishness. Nothing is more cruel than jealousy in its punishment of the person who yields to its power. It is always a thing of hate. It is more cruel than the grave. It never has the interests of the one hated at heart. We speak of it

as "insane jealousy," because there is no reason in it. The cure of it is to be found in the truth concerning it. One needs to see it in its selfish ugliness, how it belittles the one in whom it dwells, what a hell it makes where it is found, how it blinds the one whose heart is poisoned to the only possible way of escape from bondage to it. The jealous wife makes herself less and less attractive to her husband. She kills what love is left in his heart toward her by the attitude she takes towards him. One of the deadliest enemies of the soul is jealousy. To see it in its right light is to so thoroughly hate it as to easily overcome it.

It is not necessary to go farther in illustrating the blessed fact that there is power in truth itself to save from all sin. As we must choose the highest when we see it, so we must choose not evil but good, since good is infinitely higher than evil. To see good and evil in their right light is to make the choice of good inevitable. It is as impossible that a man should choose evil rather than good when he sees them both as they are, as it would be for that man to choose insanity rather than reason, knowing them both. Therefore we should most earnestly seek to know the truth concerning good and evil. Our daily prayer should

be, "O Lord, open my eyes that I may know error from truth and so be delivered from the love and power of all evil." And we should seek the answer to our prayer where it may be found—from those experts who can teach us the truth concerning the evils by which we are tempted. Every preacher should be such an expert. He should tell the people the truth concerning the sins from which he calls them to repentance. No man should be ordained to the ministry until he is prepared for such a mission. It must be made sure that he knows good from evil. Parents, also, should teach their children the truths that save. Our theatres should do the same. How unprotected in the hour of temptation are those who do not know the truth with regard to the evils by which they are tempted. If you are a pastor, let me beg of you that you preach a series of sermons on *The Truths That Save.*

Abundant material for such sermons is within easy reach. Never mind about a possible hell after death, let the people know the truth concerning the results of evil here and now. Why not get Christian physicians, lawyers, employers and social workers to give their testimony for righteousness, showing how it promotes health,

harmony and business. In other words, why not use all possible means to fill the minds of the people with

*Truths That Save*

## II

## TEMPTED BY A HUNGRY HEART [1]

Jesus was in the wilderness where he could not satisfy his hunger with bread. What he rightly desired he could not get in the right way. Multitudes are going through a similar experience. Many are in a social wilderness where there is no bread for their heart's hunger. The relationships of love that are necessary for their life are closed to them, with the result that their hearts are starving to death. This is a fearful form of starvation. Unable to find the pure love for which they hunger, they are tempted by the devil of selfishness to take love that belongs to others. A hungry heart in a social wilderness is sure to be tempted to get love from wrong sources. It is bad to have a husband's heart hungry for love that he cannot find in the heart of his wife. Wives should be sure to protect their husbands

[1] Matt. 4:2–3.

from such hunger, and husbands should do the same for their wives. Where either one is not the bread of pure love for the other, the result for both is temptation to seek elsewhere that which has been denied where only it should be sought.

"Why am I so tempted to seek the company of other women?" a married man asked me. "Why do I have a continual fight to resist my impulses to seek from them a love which man is supposed to find in his wife?" "Because," I said, "you are not finding in your wife the love for which you hunger. There was a time when it was there for you, when her love for you satisfied your hungry heart. But she no longer loves you as she did? Why not? Who is responsible for her loss of love for you? Have you chilled it by your failure to respond when it has been offered to you? Are you simply reaping the penalty of your neglect to keep the heart of your wife filled with love for you? Are you like one of those foolish virgins whose light went out because they neglected to refill their lamps with oil?" Many husbands utterly fail to appreciate the fact that it is their most sacred duty to nourish and guard the love of their wives.

I think of one whose hungry heart urges

her to seek a love that can never satisfy it. She is in a wilderness where there is no bread, a wilderness full of wild beasts of temptation, and she has been tempted to turn the stones into bread to seek to satisfy her hunger with a selfish love that belongs to others. She has been tempted to satisfy her hunger with the selfish love of one who is not prepared to fulfill it in a lifelong marriage. In a word, she is in a love wilderness where there is no true bread for her hunger.

What shall such starving souls do who cannot find that human love without which it seems their souls must die? How can they escape the temptation to satisfy their hearts at the expense of marring their characters? Their temptation is the greatest the soul meets. Those who are tempted to get money in wrong ways are not so severely tempted as they who are tempted to get love in wrong ways.

To these we say, *first,* that stone cannot possibly satisfy hunger for bread. No stolen love can satisfy the soul's hunger for honest love. No love taken away from another to whom it belongs can be the same as love that does not belong to another. The starving soul cannot get what it needs, and without which it would perish,

in any love that does not fulfill the law of righteousness and truth. As one cannot steal an honest dollar so one cannot steal pure love. To know that one truth is to be protected from the temptation to attempt with what is stone to satisfy our hunger for bread. The thing that you cannot get rightly, without sacrificing the interests of others, will never satisfy your desires. Oh, remember this when you are hungry for that which is seemingly beyond your righteous reach.

What, then, is a soul starving in the wilderness to do if he is not to make bread out of stone, and there seems no bread to be had in any other way? If the human love cannot be had must the heart eternally starve? No, there is bread to be had from another source, and an abundance of bread of the most satisfying character. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." There is the bread of God's love which the hungry soul can eat.

Though he be in a love wilderness, though he be set apart from all human love relationships, the eternal love is within his reach. He can satisfy his soul with that bread which came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall not die but shall

have eternal life. This blessed fact is witnessed to by thousands of men and women who are cut off from the relationships through which the heart is fed. Without the bread of human love they are nourished and satisfied by the divine love freely given them by God's gracious spirit. Such souls, by feeding on the bread of life, have overcome the temptations to make stone take the place of bread. If in your heart no husband dwells, if it is empty of little children whose love you cannot have, it may be filled with the love of God, of whose personal, spiritual presence you may be conscious. When, therefore, you pray to be delivered from the perils of an empty heart, connect your prayer with another, "Give me this day, O God, my daily bread of thy love." "And angels came and ministered to him." A man who is in touch with God, whose love fills his heart, will be ministered to by others sharing his divine experience. The law of spiritual attraction will bring him in contact with such persons, and their fellowship added to his experience of God will make it impossible for him to know the temptations of the hungry heart.

## III

## VISION AND VOLITION[1]

Vision and volition are closely connected, but that connection is not clearly seen by many. Where there is no vision there is no volition, and where vision is dim volition is weak. Knowing this, the Master calls the attention of the naked man to his condition. His motive in so doing is love, since his aim is to induce the man to robe him in beautiful garments. Before we can enrich a man, we must make him see his poverty. Before we can clothe him we must make him see his nakedness. Before we can give him vision we must make him realize his blindness. So long as a man says, "I am rich, increased in goods and have need of nothing," we are powerless to give him vision, to enrich him, to clothe him.

Men come into my office walking in naked falsehoods, without a shred to conceal them, without being at all conscious of their condition, and even when they are made to admit their falsehoods they walk naked in them without realizing their shame. It is not until they are made to see

[1] Rev. 3:17-18.

the shame of the falsehood that they have power to escape from continuance in it. And what is true of falsehood is true of every evil thing, vision of which is essential for the development of sufficient volition to enable a man to escape it. A deep conviction of sin, therefore, must always precede a true conversion. Men are lost to shame because they are blind to their sins. Make them see sin as it is, in its shameful effects upon those whom it involves, make them see it in connection with what it would mean if all men should practice it, and there will come to them such hatred of it, as the result of clear vision of it, as will make it possible for God to supply them with the necessary power of will to escape from further practice of it.

My experience in Church House for eight years, in dealing with thousands of men and women down and out in sin, has convinced me that the one great thing to be aimed at in serving men is to open their eyes to the shamefulness of sins that do not appear to them in that light at all. Not by making light of such sin, nor by exaggerating it, but by getting men to form a clear conception of it, are they delivered from it.

## IV

## A DRUNKEN HUSBAND[1]

"What is the good of your life to you?" I asked. "None," he replied. "What's it worth to your wife, who will never have any peace until you are dead, unless you are saved from the drink? And the children—how much of good does it mean to them that you are alive? When they are asked about their father, what do they have to say? Either they must lie or confess that you have left them to starve for the money you have spent for drink. And if you die in this state and they ever come to your grave, what will be their thoughts?"

"For God's sake, stop," he said.

"No," I replied, "I cannot stop yet, for you will never have will power sufficient to overcome your drink habit until you see it as it is in its relations to the innocent suffering of your people. If all men should follow your example, it would wreck every home, it would beggar every child, it would stop all business. In other words, if no man could be depended on to keep sober longer than you can, the whole world would

[1] Mark 9 : 42.

perish in a very hell of chaos and pain. To put it in plain language, your example and influence would wreck the world."

"It isn't so bad as that."

"Yes," I replied, "no words can picture what your example of habitual drunkenness would mean if it should be universally followed, and it is necessary that you should see this in order that you may have power to escape it."

And he saw his sin and was saved from it.

## V

## OUT OF TUNE[1]

*"So far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

Harmony is the great word. It matters not whether the key is white or black, bass or treble, there is something the matter with it if it does not chord with the other keys with which it is connected. If where it is there is discord, it is wrong somehow, for if it were as it was intended by its maker, it would help with others to make music instead of creating discord. And what is true of the musical instrument is also true of every member of the body,

[1] Rom. 12:18.

whether the hand, or the foot, or the eye, or the ear. If it is hindering other members from doing their work, if it is involving them in weakness and pain, it is because it is wrong in some way.

It is precisely so with us men. If we cannot live in harmonious relations of peace with others, it is because we are not right in ourselves. There is something wrong in us, or we should be in perfect harmony with one another, and there would be music where we are, for God never made us for discord.

To find out what it is in us that prevents us from living in harmonious relations with others, is to learn what it is in us that must be corrected. That is a very simple statement, is it not? You ask me what you must do to be saved, and I reply, find out what it is in you that prevents you from living in harmonious relationship with others,—and overcome that. Unless you do, nothing else will matter. You may believe what you please, and join as many churches as you like, but unless you correct in yourself that which is discordant, that which makes it impossible that there should be harmony in any relationship in which you are, all will go for nothing.

It is not difficult to discover what the

discordant things in us are, what those things are that unfit a man for harmonious relations with God and men. They are certain to queer him in all the relationships of life in which he may be placed. They may all be included in a single word—selfishness. No harmonious relationship can be organized on the basis of that motive, for selfish people cannot live in peace with others who are selfish, like themselves. Unity of motive, in that case, does not mean harmony of life. Neither can the selfish person live in harmony with the unselfish person, so that the selfish person cannot live in harmony with any one. Can you live in peace in a life of falsehood, or uncleanness, or drunkenness, or pride, or laziness? Certainly not. So, if there is to be a heaven here, or hereafter, or anywhere, to be fitted for it you will have to be free from the things in yourself that are rooted and grounded in a selfish motive. Pray, therefore, that God's holy love may be shed abroad in your heart, as it will be when with all your heart you so desire.

## VI

## TWO MOTIVES[1]

Two motives are represented by two foundations, one of sand and the other of rock. The man who built on the sand did not consider what was under his house or what relation it had to the question whether his house would stand or fall when it was tested. He represents multitudes who do not look at what is underneath their deeds and words, who never consider their motive in speaking or acting as they do. And yet, motive is to conduct what a foundation is to a building.

A strong motive must underlie and support a strong life. Men fall into sin because their motive is selfish,—precisely as the house on the sand falls because of its surface foundation,—for selfishness is weakness. So far as supporting a right life is concerned, it is absolutely inadequate. It will not, it cannot, under any circumstances of education, or wealth, or culture, support such a life.

A right life cannot long stand safely on a wrong motive. Men do not seem to see this any more than the man who builded

[1] Matt. 7 : 24-27.

on a sand foundation saw that his house would not stand when it was tested.

Here is revealed the secret of the failure of multitudes of men, in all their earnest efforts to live the Christian life. They try to live such a life. They make plans to develop the Christian character, and all their labors go for nothing, solely because they neglect to find and fulfil the proper motive. Their will is weak, because their motive is wrong. This is the secret of their weakness. It explains their repeated failures, which will continue to multiply until their cause is discovered and corrected. A wrong motive is always connected with dim moral vision with its feeble volition.

There is but one foundation for all relationships, political, economic, social—the same foundation for all virtues,—chastity, honesty, truthfulness, meekness, patience, humility. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the man whose motive is love. A man becomes a Christian in that moment when he takes as his character-foundation the one motive of Jesus. Until he does that he may profess all creeds of religion, but all will be in vain. Until he takes that motive, his foundation is on the sand, his lamp is without oil, he is without the wedding garment, he is meal without leaven, he is soil

without the good seed. In a word, the repentance that opens the Kingdom of God to a man, the repentance that marks the beginning of the life of God in man, the repentance that precedes and insures the new birth of man is—Oh! hear my word,—don't miss my thought,—that repentance is change of motive, not change of belief to some other dogma of religion, not connection of one's self with some ecclesiastical institution, but change of heart, or motive, from selfishness to unselfishness, from putting one's own interests first to putting the interest of others first.

## VII

## PROTECT YOUR MOTIVE

Protect your motive, for it will be in peril until it is finally perfected. While it is growing, many things will endanger it. If you don't guard it the birds will catch it away, or the sun will wither it, or the thorns will choke it. It is like the oil in the lamp of the virgins which must be frequently replenished if the light is to be kept burning until the bridegroom comes. That embodiment of wisdom—Merlin, did

not notice that the impersonation of evil—Vivian, had taken possession of the rudder of his boat and was steering it, when he thought he still had control of it. So a man's motive may change and he not know it. In the language of Jesus, while he is asleep the enemy may come and sow tares among the wheat.

A selfish motive does not often go by its right name, or appear in its true light. It has an infinite variety of disguises, often appearing as an angel of light. It is a wolf, but it comes in sheep's clothing. You will need, therefore, greatly need, to protect yourself from mistake concerning your motive. Selfishness is the most subtle of all the evils of the world. It will so blind you that you will think you have the interests of others at heart even when you are sacrificing their interests to your own selfish ambitions or appetites or passions.

## VIII

## MOTIVE MISINTERPRETED[1]

It would seem impossible that one should mistake hay, wood and stubble for gold

[1] 1 Cor. 3 : 11-13.

and precious stones. Of course this is not possible in a material sense, but it is possible in the matter of mistaking one's motive. With love as their motive, people say and do things that are absolutely valueless if not positively harmful, things that defeat their purpose, things that are as much out of harmony with their motive as hay and wood and stubble were out of harmony with the unperishable foundation of stone upon which they were built.

Let me give you some illustrations of this from my own experience and the experience of others with whom I have been brought into contact in my work in Church House. How much of worthless and harmful work do we find connected with a good motive! Here is a person with a heart full of love, whose one aim is to advance the interests of suffering humanity, but by indiscriminate giving she defeats her purpose and does infinitely more harm than good. Her works have to be destroyed, not because their motive is evil, but because their motive has been strangely misguided. Recently a woman came to me in a highly nervous state, bordering on insanity, asking help. I found the nervous tension of her life was due to this mistaken application of her motive. She was deny-

ing herself the very things that she needed for her health, in order that she might have more money to give for the relief of the sick and the suffering. She was unfitting herself for service to others by the very things that she was doing in order to serve them. A few years ago I had a painful experience along the same line. Desiring to fulfill, in the largest possible way, the Christian motive, I refused to take the necessary vacations from my work, devoting all my time to active efforts on behalf of suffering humanity, but as the result of breaking nature's laws, I was compelled to lay aside entirely from my work for over four months.

It seems to me that no one could have chosen a better illustration of this peril of a misguided motive than Paul has given us in the text. It exactly sets it forth. Underneath so much of valueless work, where one would not suspect its presence, one will find a true Christian motive. The loss resulting from this misguiding of true motive is very great,—the loss of all the enduring work that might have been done in the time that was wasted, and of all good results that could have been secured with the money that was wasted,—hay, wood and stubble in doctrines of religion, fit only for

destruction; hay, wood and stubble in philanthropic work—all lost because not done in wisdom as well as love.

How shall we apply our motive so that our methods shall not contradict it? I think there is only one answer to this question, and that is by relating more closely and harmoniously everything that we do with the one true motive in the light of which we shall be able to see the proper methods by which to fulfil it. A little thought would have shown the builders that what they were building on the foundation was not according to its character. The one true foundation is also the clear guide concerning the superstructure to build upon it. Get the true foundation and you need not mistake what should be the nature of that which is constructed upon it. Anything you may do that contradicts holy love will prove valueless—it will profit you nothing. When you would help a man consider what will advance his interest, not what will meet his desires.

## IX

## "NOW YE ARE CLEAN"[1]

Jesus said this after he had washed his disciples' feet. It is almost impossible for us to imagine the change that was made in the souls of Christ's disciples by this act. He so washed their feet as to purify their hearts, cleansing them, at least for the moment, from pride and selfishness. When he had finished his service of love he said unto them, "Ye are clean."

We have all had such moments, when, as the result of the touch of Christ, we have felt his cleansing power. Then we were cleansed of all intention to sin. There was no purpose in our hearts to do evil. "But not all," Jesus said. He made one exception to his statement, "Now ye are clean," and the exceptional man was Judas, in whom there was no intention to be clean, since at that very moment he was deliberately planning to betray his Master for gain. The distinction that Jesus makes here, between the clean and the unclean, is worthy of our closest attention and demands our clearest interpretation.

There is exactly this difference between

[1] John 13 : 10.

two classes of men in this service and in this Church House. They may be equally sinful in word and deed, but to one Jesus says, "Now ye are clean," while to the other he says, "But not you." For that man is clean in Christ's sight who aims to be clean, who struggles to be clean, prays to be clean, who has no unclean intention, or purpose, in his heart. To such a man the comforting words of the Son of God come tonight, "Now, *now* ye are clean." Uncleansed as you are of the defilement of sin, you are clean since you no longer love sin. God does not impute to a man that which the man does not aim for, that which he hates, that from which he is longing to escape. In His sight every man is what he purposes to be. Glorious word of Christ, "Now," not henceforth, not after your words and deeds have been perfected, but "Now," in anticipation of such perfecting, because the purpose of it is in your heart and the consecration to it is in your soul and the faith of it is in your mind. "Now," Jesus says, "ye are clean."

Every man in this congregation, I say, however sinful he is, may hear this gracious word, "Now ye are clean," upon the simple condition that I have declared, the condition of purpose to surrender his heart to

God for the cleansing which he wills and which, with all his heart, he desires.

It seems almost too sad to have to add, "But not all," with reference to some men here present. But that sentence, also, belongs to every man here who knows, in his soul, that he loves sin and that he purposes to commit sin when he has opportunity to do so in such fashion that he may hope to escape its penalty. If, like Judas, you are secretly intending to sin, no matter how much you may involve the innocent in suffering,—if selfishness, in a single word, is your motive and intention, then you are the man who is excepted from this statement, "Now ye are clean." You are one of those to whom the words, "But not all," belong. It is a fearful exception, one which I should not like to have applied to my soul, one from which I should think you would want to escape at this moment.

And such escape you may make, if, even now, you will have your motive cleansed, so that it shall be possible for God, by His Holy Spirit and by the word of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, to include you among those to whom He can say, "Now ye are clean." What a gracious word that is! What comfort it brings to a man's conscience! What a burden it takes from his

soul to have the assurance afresh from the lips of Jesus, and confirmed by the Spirit of God in his own conscience, that he is now clean in the sight of God, because he wills to be clean, and intends to avail himself of the cleansing ministries of the religion of Jesus. Sweetest word on mortal's tongue, sweetest carol ever sung, "Now, now ye are clean."

## X

## FOR THEIR SAKES I SANCTIFY MYSELF THAT THEY MAY BE SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH[1]

If I should judge Jesus by this single sentence, I should love him with all my heart and pray that I might be filled with his Spirit. I do not know of any word of Jesus that more highly honors him—"For their sakes." Whose? Those whom the Father has given me. Those with whom I am, or ever shall be, in touch. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Their interests demand this of me, for I shall be able to do so much for them if I sanctify myself unto God on their behalf,

[1] John 17:19.

to receive from Him what they need. Indeed, the fact is that their greatest needs cannot be fulfilled by one who is not thus set apart unto God. One who, therefore, loves men will sanctify himself unto God on their behalf. It is the greatest thing a man can do for others, the richest of all service he can render, and therefore its rewards are the greatest that a soul can win for himself.

A man who sanctifies himself, not that he merely, or first of all, may be sanctified, but that others through him may be sanctified, fulfills the very mission of the Son of God in saving the world. Nothing short of such sanctification of himself to God as Jesus made of himself to God can qualify one for fellowship with Jesus in his world-saving mission. This will appear more clearly when we come to understand what Christ meant when he said, "I sanctify myself."

The word sanctify means to set apart. It is from the same root as saint, and holy. For one to sanctify himself to God is to wholly set himself apart unto God, to surrender himself fully to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. Negatively, he was to separate himself from all that would prevent him from enjoying intimate personal union with God. Jesus saw

clearly what those things were from which he must sanctify himself if he would dwell in God and have God dwell in him. And his love for his disciples, and for the world that should at last through them believe in Him, was sufficient to lead him to gladly renounce all that separated him from God.

Let us get into the very heart of Jesus here; let us look at the text through his eyes. Then we shall see Jesus as he looks upon the polluted and perishing state of his disciples, and others, with whom he was in touch. How keenly he felt their sorrows and how sadly he lamented their sins! He could not bear the thought that they should be left unsaved and unhelped in their perishing condition. "Sheep," he said they were, "without a shepherd"; men consumed of thirst, without any means of finding the springs; persons perishing with hunger, without any ability to find bread; souls being preyed upon by wolves in sheep's clothing, whose disguise they were unable to penetrate in time to escape destruction.

"For their sakes"—for the sake of those who could have no help except he brought it, who could not save themselves and whom no man seemed able to save. "For their sakes," who looked in vain for help

to the church with all of its worthless sacrifices and services.

Oh, the appeal that the helpless state of men made to Jesus, to Jesus who clearly saw that these people were unsaved, not because they were indifferent or unwilling to be saved, but because no man so loved them as to put himself at God's disposal, so that through him God could save them!

Jesus knew that the power and peace and joy and health that these men needed could only be had from God through some one who was in such personal and intimate relationship to God that he could receive from Him what they needed, and transmit it to them. He realized that God had an abundance of all that these men needed, but that He was unable to impart it to them because He could find no one through whom He could send His gifts. It is the Father's will to impart what one man needs through some other man. So when Jesus said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," he meant that he proposed to connect God and man, to so open his whole soul to them both in holy love, that he should be able to serve as a channel for the Father to send His gifts to His children.

Could any man have a higher aim or nobler motive than that? "For their sakes

I sanctify myself." Could words sweeter than those fall on mortal ears? How beautiful the soul whence they came; and their greatness becomes still greater when we understand that Jesus sanctified himself unto God, not only for the sake of those who loved him, but also for the sake of those who hated him and who would crucify him. He set himself apart from every sin from which he sought to free others, from the love of money of Judas, from the moral cowardice of Peter, from the unbeliefs of Thomas, from the sins of the women who felt when they touched him that they were clean, from the sin of pride which he rebuked with his deepest humility. From all the sins of men, he sanctified himself, that through his example he might have sanctifying influence upon them.

His motive must be ours if we are to do his works. Let parents who would sanctify their children sanctify themselves from all from which they would free their children. Let pastors who would sanctify their congregations sanctify themselves from all from which they would sanctify their people. Let no man preach against that from which he is not himself struggling, with all his might and prayer to God for help, to sanctify himself.

My dear reader, permit me to be very personal here. Let me tell you of the effect of what I have written on my own soul, as I have questioned myself concerning my experience of my own words and have asked again and again, am I ready to turn aside from all that mars my fellowship with my God, that I may be able to lead others to do the same? Do I so love men as for their sakes to sanctify myself unto God that through me He may help them? Am I prepared to give up all that weakens my sense of the presence of God and so hinders it from fully influencing me on the behalf of suffering, sinning, dying humanity? Join with me in this one prayer above all others, that we may unite with our Lord in saying, "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

## XI

## ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING[1]

These words are not synonyms by any means. Jesus does not here simply change the figure to express in different words the idea of praying for what we need. We must ask, but asking, alone, is not enough.

[1] Matt. 7 : 7-8.

Seeking must go with asking, if our asking is to mean finding. If we ask for bread and seek it in a stone, we shall ask in vain. If we ask for fish and seek it in a scorpion, can God give us what we ask? If we ask for coal, we must seek it where there is coal. Every one that asketh, receiveth, if he seeks what he asks where it may be found, but not otherwise.

This is a great truth, is it not? How clearly it explains why much of our asking has been in vain! Have we not asked without any thought of seeking what we ask where it might be found? When we ask for material bread, we seek it where it may be found. When we ask for knowledge, we seek it in books and schools, where it may be found; but when we ask for spiritual things we do not employ the same wisdom in seeking them.

We ask for the fruits of the Spirit without seeking the Spirit. We ask for the love of God but do not seek it in His Spirit in our hearts and in close fellowship with those who embody it. We pray for strength but fill our mind with thoughts of weakness. We pray for peace and seek it in that which is discordant. We pray for rest without seeking it in the one great

restful motive. We ask for purity without seeking that which purifies.

We may ask what we will that is in Jesus if we seek it in him. If we seek in his words and deeds what we ask God to give us through him, we shall surely receive what we ask.

Only, remember, we may have to knock in order to find what we seek. What does that mean? We seek what we ask where it may be found, but it may require some effort on our part to possess it. The desired thing may not be found by us at once, even when we come where it is. I have such an experience with texts, in which I find what I seek of truth after I have knocked at their door for a while. They do not always immediately open to me, in response to my asking for the truths which they contain. Sometimes a little meditation reveals something in my state of mind that must be removed before I can possibly see and enter into the truth of the text in which what I seek is embodied. When we fulfill the conditions of this text, as they are clearly indicated by Jesus, when we ask that which he wills for us, and seek it where he has laid it up for us, with patient effort to fulfill in ourselves the conditions of entering into possession of it, our asking will

mean receiving, our seeking will mean finding, our knocking will mean that it will be opened to us.

## XII

## A WRETCHED MAN[1]

I know of no wretchedness so terrible as that of the man of this text, whose wretchedness consisted in his utter inability at the time to see any hope of escape from bondage to a sin that he hated. If he had not hated the sin he would not have felt so keenly his bondage to it. As he tells us in the context, he "loved righteousness in the inner man," but he was compelled to do the things he hated, and could not do the things he loved. This is the wretched state of multitudes of good men. Theirs is the most cruel form of bondage the world knows. How unspeakably wretched is the man who longs to speak the truth but is forced to lie, who longs to love but is compelled to hate, who wants to be pure but is forced into impurity, who wants to act on the motive of unselfishness but finds himself speaking and acting selfishly every day! Oh, wretched man that he is! As a

[1] Rom. 7:24.

man does not feel his poverty if he has no love for money; as he does not feel his ignorance if he has no love for knowledge; as he does not feel the wretchedness of his illness if he has no longing for health, so no man knows the wretchedness of the man of this text except one who loves righteousness which he finds himself unable to practice.

Paul's way of escape from such wretchedness is clear. It is not in the consciousness of having already escaped from his bondage that one finds relief from his wretchedness, but in the consciousness that he is *escaping,* that he is emerging, that he is growing out of the thing he hates into the thing that he loves. We do not speak of the man who is very ill as "in a wretched condition" when he is recovering, nor of the man as "wretchedly poor" who is growing rich, nor of one as "wretchedly ignorant" who is being educated, nor of one as "in a wretched state of imprisonment" in the mine while upon his ear falls the music of the pick of those who are digging him out. So, however imperfect a man may be, his is not a state of wretchedness if he realizes that he is being delivered from it, and that ultimately he is to be perfectly freed. If he is conscious that he

is forgiven and approved and certain to be perfected, he may well speak of himself as one who is filled with joyful anticipation.

Oh, happy man that he is, who is conscious that the Spirit of God in him is leading him out of moral darkness into moral light, out of moral weakness into moral power, who has daily evidence that the law of the Spirit of God is making him free from the law of sin and death!

## XIII

## THE SAVING TOUCH[1]

She touched the hem of his garment. She touched that which was in touch with one who was in touch with God. She had no doubt of Jesus' union with God at the time when she touched his garment. What was the result to her? A mighty change. We may not know exactly what it was, but it was such a change as would come to a woman who fully believed that she was touching one who was in touch with God. Such faith as hers will open the door for Jesus to share with her the health that is in his soul. It was an easy thing for her

[1] Luke 8 : 44.

to do, far easier for her just then to touch one who was in touch with God than for her to touch God Himself immediately.

Does it seem to you incredible that such a touch as hers should mean so much to her? There is no reason why it should seem so. Touch a wire that is in touch with electricity and what will be the result? Touch a garment that is in touch with one who has been in touch with a contagious disease and who doubts that the result may be that you will take the disease itself of the one whose garments you touched? Touch a substance in touch with fire and you will feel the fire itself. Do not these illustrations give you some faith in the blessed truth that to come in touch with any one who is in touch with God may mean to come in touch with God Himself, and to receive from Him something of his nature of righteousness and truth and love and health and power? To touch that which is pure is as surely purifying as to touch that which is cold is surely chilling. To take into one's mind a word coming from another mind that is filled with the Spirit of God is to feel something of the Spirit of God. Oh, you who are unable as yet to come to God directly, get in touch with some one who is in touch with Him,

through whom God can impart to you what you need from His loving hand.

Remember that God is love, and that one who is in touch with God is full of love for man. It was this love in Jesus that mightily affected all who came in touch with the Master. If, like Him, we would help those who touch us we have only to share with him his experience of the love of God for men.

## XIV

## FIELDS WHITE FOR THE HARVEST[1]

These are fields that were seen only by Jesus, fields which the disciples who were present with him utterly overlooked, fields for which it was hard to find laborers, and yet fields that were all ready to be harvested. What fields are these to which Jesus makes special reference in this text? They are fields of human beings like the Samaritan woman whom he had just saved from her life of uncleanness. She was a woman who had had five husbands and was then living with a man not her husband.

[1] John 4 : 35.

There are fields of women like her in all of our cities, for whom little hope of recovery is felt, even by the church itself; persons who are neglected, so far as any intelligent and spiritual effort is concerned looking toward their recovery to a life of purity.

"Lift up your eyes," Jesus says, "and see the multitudes, the fields of such persons who are perishing because the saving grace of God's holy love is not brought to their rescue. There are fields of drunkards staggering through life into the drunkard's grave, for the most part overlooked, even by those who are disciples of Jesus, but who lack his vision of the salvability of such persons. There are fields of thieves, in our prisons and out of them, without any one to save them from their selfish motive, and so from their dishonest lives. There are those fields, not in far-away Africa, or India, but right within eyesight, if we would only lift up our eyes and see them, "fields white unto the harvest," in the sense of being in a condition to be saved at once, and yet fields that are overlooked by those who should gather them, or that are despaired of by those who should have hope of saving them.

Pray that such laborers as Jesus be sent into these fields,—men who, like the Master,

have the power of God in themselves with which to enlighten and empower such persons to forsake their sins. Such laborers as Jesus are few indeed, men having such power to save drunkards, thieves and harlots. Only God can send such men to save, since it is only as one has His love, as Christ had it, that one will be able to see and convince men of their sins and lead them to forsake them.

## XV

## WELLS WITHOUT WATER[1]

Wells without water have nothing in them to satisfy the thirst of man, and are disappointing to the expectations created by their name and appearance. Wells without water—a form only of the thing promised and desired. How many of such wells there are in the world!

There are *churches* that fulfill this figure. Thirsty souls come to them for the water of life, clear as crystal from the throne of God, but find it not. Souls thirsty for God's love, for God's peace, for God's power, for God's fellowship, are painfully disap-

[1] 2 Peter 2 : 17.

pointed when they seek the satisfaction of their spiritual thirst for these things in many of our churches. I am afraid that many of our *sermons* are wells without water. The one thing lacking in them is *water,* and this is keenly felt by those who seek in them that which shall satisfy their thirst. "Oh, yes, it was a beautiful sermon. It was a good sermon. It was a true enough sermon. It interested the people sufficiently, but I am just as spiritually thirsty as I was before I heard it." It was a well without water.

What is true of the church and of the sermon is too largely true of *Christians,* every one of whom ought to be a well of water springing up into eternal life. So Jesus Christ declared. A man thirsting for the Spirit of God should find that Spirit in every man who bears the name of Jesus. Persons hungering for the fruit of the Spirit—love, righteousness, humility, gentleness, peace, joy, should find those in the life of the man who professes to share Christ's experience of God. But how many of us are forced to confess that too much of the time, at least, we are wells without the water of life—the Spirit of the living God?

Most of our *charity societies,* I am

afraid, are wells without water. They have very little of sympathy and love and God in their work. Those who come to them in their hours of deepest need and trouble find some material relief, but very little if any of that Spirit of God, which is the bread and water of life. The text is a fertile one and the preacher whose eyes fall upon it will know how to expand it, how to apply it, so that his hearers shall unite with him in seeking to so embody the love of God in their individual lives that each shall be a well of love springing up into eternal life.

O the people everywhere are so thirsty for love, for such pure love as Christ was filled with, for such love as things past or present or future cannot rob one of. It is solely because such love is seen in Christ that all men are drawn to him. I repeat that the thing in Christ that has drawn men of all classes to him, and that will yet cause all knees to bow in worship of Him, is his love for all men. Souls thirsty for love find it in him, as a well of water ever springing up into eternal life.

## XVI

## HOW THREE THOUSAND MEN WERE SAVED[1]

"And they were pricked in their hearts"; and as the result, they were all brought to repentance of their sins and to a true conversion to God. Their motive was converted and the result of their change of motive was a similar change of life.

What was it about Peter's sermon that converted three thousand hardened, blinded men—men who had consented to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ? What pricked such men in their hearts? It was Peter's way of preaching the cross of Christ. It was not the way the cross is usually preached. He did not say that Christ's death satisfied the justice of God and made it possible for Him to pardon the sinners. He said,—You killed the Lord, desiring a murderer in his stead. You are guilty of the blood of Jesus and your sin against him is all the greater because it was a sin against pure love. You struck at one whose whole life was spent in doing good, who gave you no cause whatever for your attack upon him. There is, therefore,

[1] Acts 2 : 37.

no possible excuse for your sin of nailing him to the accursed tree. Never mind what good God may bring out of your evil deed; that will not in the least free you from your guilt.

Under such preaching, men were pricked in the heart and brought to a true repentance. I know, Peter added, that you knew not what you did, but now that you do know the significance of your act and the motive that inspired it, it is your duty to repent and be converted.

"I shall not attempt to relate your sin to the crucifixion of Jesus two thousand years ago," I said to a young man, "since it might be difficult to make you see such a distant connection. I want you to see your sin in its effects upon your sacred mother and your preacher father and others who, because of their love for you, are filled with sorrow and pain whenever they think of you. You don't want it to be so, but you can't help it, the one who loves you most must suffer most, on account of your sinful life. The saloon-keeper does not care that you are down and out, but your mother does. He who sold you the drink would not be pricked to the heart if he should know that you were starving. Neither would the boys,

for the most part, who drink with you; but your mother—her suffering for you is proportionate to her love for you. For five years you have had your heel on her brow. You have been drinking her blood; and your preacher father has had the joy and strength of his ministry taken away by his memory of his failure to save his own son; and that beautiful girl who was hoping to become your wife lives on with a broken heart because of your selfishness in unfitting yourself for the sacred relationship with you which you had invited her to share."

And he was so pricked to the heart that he repented on the spot and sought, then and there, God's help, so that from that day, Nov. 10, 1911, he has not touched a drop of drink. He has taken the pain out of his mother's and father's hearts and has made a happy home for the girl who had given him up because of his intemperance.

## XVII

## THE SUPREME TEST OF LOVE[1]

Notice under what circumstances Jesus asked Peter for an expression of his love.

[1] John 2 : 15.

It was not until Jesus, himself, had given the utmost expression of his own love for his disciples. Not until after Jesus had died for Peter did he ask Peter the question, "Lovest thou me?" His example here is to be followed by all who ask love from others, the example of one who plants the love that he wishes to reap. He does not ask for a return for a love which he has not given.

Jesus questioned the love of Peter. It is a question, he said, whether you love me even now, after all the love that I have bestowed upon you. The fact that you say that you love me does not prove that you do. You said you loved me before, sufficiently to lay down your life for me, and yet within a few hours you fulfilled my prediction that you would thrice deny me. Your profession of love is open to question, to serious question.

Yes, Jesus had reason to question the love for him of his foremost disciple. I wonder if there is not now a question in his mind as to whether we love him or not, we, who like Peter, are his disciples and have said that he is so precious to us that we would rather die than fail to prove our love for him.

Three times Jesus challenged Peter's

love, as many times as Peter had denied him. And now I have come to the deep significance of this questioning by Jesus of Peter's love,—the proof that Jesus demanded of the genuineness of the love which Peter professed for him. "Lovest thou me more than these?" Jesus asked. More than the nets and fishes? No, that was not what Jesus meant, for Peter, on the occasion of his first meeting with Jesus, was quite ready to leave his nets and fishes, that he might become one of his followers. What Jesus questioned was whether now Peter was prepared to say that he loved Jesus more than he loved any of Jesus' disciples. Jesus demands of Peter the supreme proof of his love for him, and that proof is that he show his love for his Master in loving his Master's disciples. If you love me, Jesus said, prove it by feeding my sheep. There is no other evidence of your love for me that will satisfy my demand. *All your professions of love for me will count for nothing until you prove your love for me by expressing it in loving service for my disciples.*

Jesus evidently didn't feel that Peter understood this teaching, for he immediately repeated His question, "Lovest thou me?" and again said, prove your love for

me by feeding my lambs. After that there still seemed a question in the mind of Jesus as to whether Peter was prepared to prove his love in this manner, as to whether his love for him would bear this test, and so he said to him again, "Lovest thou me?" If you do, I tell you again the thing that you do not seem to understand yet, that I shall question your love as long as it fails to express itself in love for my disciples, that no profession of your love for me will count for anything until it is confirmed by such love for my disciples as alone proves the genuineness of your love for me. "For by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that ye have love one for another."

When we bring our professed love for Christ to this supreme test is there not in our own souls a question as to whether we truly love him? And is it not necessary that in all of our pulpits this voice of Christ should be heard, in season and out of season, in what may seem to be wearisome repetitiousness, insisting upon the fact to which most of our people seem to be as blind as Peter was blind to it,—that there can be no true love for Christ except in that love for him which manifests itself and proves itself in loving ministries to his

sheep and lambs, to all those whom he loves.

If we love Christ more than we love those whom he loves, so that we would do for him what we would not do for them, then for love of him we will serve them. For we must manifest our love for one by doing what he most desires us to do. And what Christ most wants us to do is to love men as he loves them. And if, because we love him more than others, we serve others for his sake, we shall come, through such service to men whom we do not love, to kindle in their hearts a love for us that shall kindle in us love for them.

## XVIII

## GARMENTS SPOTTED BY THE FLESH[1]

Infected garments are more dangerous than the diseased flesh itself. Many will touch or wear the garments who would not touch the evil with which they are spotted. First, there is the spotted book. In the main, it is pure, but there are spots in its suggestions of evil. Such books are deadly, contaminating all who touch them. And

[1] Jude 23.

yet the people are, for the most part, eager to read them, not realizing the damage they are receiving from contact with such books, as they take their spotted thoughts into their minds to be turned into words and deeds.

Then there is the spotted speech of men whose words are tainted with unclean thoughts. Some of our newspapers are garments spotted by the flesh. In connection with the presentation of the news of the day they print details of vice and crime that stain the soul of the reader.

Then there is the theater. Many plays, and especially musical comedies, are spotted by the flesh. They are purposely written so as to be suggestive of evil.

Then there are memories of past sins, that are very deadly garments, spotted by the flesh. They bring back scenes and evidences of a sinful life. There is only one way of escaping such memories, and that is pointed out in the text, in which it is enjoined upon us that we *hate* the garments that are spotted by the flesh. So long as we take that attitude toward them, they are absolutely without power to harm us. Impure memories may come into a man's mind and leave no stain upon his character, so long as he takes the attitude of hatred

toward them. And what is true of memories is true of every garment spotted by the flesh. If we are brought into contact with them in any way and take toward them the attitude of mind suggested by the writer of this text, we shall escape all injury from them.

## XIX

## CLEANSED BY A WORD[1]

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." How clean that man must be whose words cleanse those who hear them, filling their minds with his thoughts,—for a man's soul goes into his words! They are his seeds. Through them he reproduces himself in all who receive them. He wraps himself up in his words. If he is unclean, then he must say to those who hear and receive his words, Now are ye unclean because of the words that I have spoken unto you. If he is impatient, then he must say to those who hear his words and receive them, Now are ye impatient because of the word that I have spoken unto you. If he is jealous, then he must say to the one receiving his

[1] John 15 : 3.

word and being influenced by it, Now are ye jealous through the word that I have spoken unto you, or if his word is a word of hate, then he must say to the one who comes under its influence, yielding himself to its thought, Now are you filled with hatred because of the word I have spoken unto you.

The words of Christ are manifestations of Christ. His mind was so clean that he could take one of his thoughts and wrap it up in a word and put it into another mind and say, "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Because his mind was so pure as to refuse to consent to lustful thought, he could purify with his word those who received it. I think nothing so glorifies Jesus as knowledge of his word.

If one would be clean let him *fill his mind with clean words.* Try and see if they do not make you clean. If one would be strong let him fill his mind with the thoughts of being strong. If one would have more love let him feed his love on the love of others. Oh, the power of clean words to purify a corrupt mind. Some of us know what it is to say, Now we are clean through the clean words by which we have expelled unclean thoughts.

## XX

## GET RIGHT WITH MEN FIRST[1]

Leave thy gift at the altar. Before you seek harmonious relations with God, seek harmonious relations with men. The text represents a man as reversing this order, as bringing his gift to the altar of God, seeking fellowship with Him at a time when he was responsible for his own estrangement from a brother man. With his relations wrong toward man, he imagined that he could yet have right relations with his Heavenly Father, that he could get right with God without getting right with man, that he could be at peace with God while he was responsible for being at strife with man. Perhaps he thought that after he had entered into harmonious relations with God, he would seek such relations with man. He thought that the thing for him to do was first to get right with God; after that, to get right with the man whom he had wronged. If so, Jesus pointed out his mistake when he said, "Leave your gift at God's altar, unoffered, until you have taken the necessary steps to secure reconciliation with the man from whom you are

[1] Matt. 5 : 22-24.

estranged. Then come, seeking reconciliation with God."

Here is a truth that should be proclaimed from every pulpit and brought, so far as possible, to the attention of every living man. For the old error is still with us, that a man can have right relations with God though his relations with men are wrong. Across the ocean we see startling illustrations of this terrible delusion. Before entering into battle to slay one another, armies celebrate the Mass or engage in some other form of worship of God. They imagine that their relations with God are right while their relations with one another are cruelly, desperately wrong. They bring their gifts to God's altar while they are murdering His children.

What a change there would be in Christendom—a change beyond the power of imagination to conceive, if those who bear the name of Christ would actually listen to the teaching of this text and observe the order which is here indicated! What if all Christians, before coming to God's altar, should do all in their power to secure the relationship of love with one another! Here is a religion that would save the world. Obedience to this single

word of Christ would go far toward purifying the world from all sin. Until it is obeyed, religion will have no power to perfect social, political and national relationships.

To you men of Church House, this word comes with peculiar emphasis, for many of you have come from homes desolated by your sins of intemperance, dishonesty and impurity. Do not imagine that you can secure the approval of God until you do what you need to, to secure the approval of those wives and mothers and children whom you have so cruelly wronged. Do not imagine that in God's name we shall release you from responsibility for making the wrong things of your lives right, or that we shall pronounce His blessing upon you, until you do so.

Before you come to God's altar seeking His pardon and asking His approval, dedicate yourself to the work of seeking harmonious relations with all those from whom your sins have estranged you. Unless you do that, all your seeking for God's favor will be in vain. No gift that you can bring to His altar will count for anything until you go and make your peace with those against whom you have sinned. Go tonight, in the purpose of your soul to do so sol-

emnly registered before your conscience in the presence of God. When God sees such a purpose in your soul, He will impute to you the thing that you have consecrated yourself to do, and will give you His peace.

Grace, mercy and peace from God you cannot have so long as you are neglecting to fulfill your sacred obligations to men.

## XXI

## WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS[1]

There is a play entitled "Watch Your Step." I want to write some notes on—*watch your thoughts.* Formerly thoughts came down the street of my soul and entered into my mind just as they pleased. I did not select them with the care with which I now do. They entered in at their pleasure, stayed as long as they pleased and did what they wished. The result was days of depression and other evils that resulted from such indiscriminate thinking. Now when thoughts approach my mind, I am on my guard concerning them and select, with prayerful care, those which I wish to entertain. Many I reject utterly,

[1]Phil. 4 : 8.

as soon as they make their approach, for I know them perfectly as thoughts that mean depression of spirit, irritation of temper, and evil works. These I make passing thoughts, and I hurry their going as much as possible. Sometimes they get into my mind unawares, but as soon as I discover their presence I refuse to entertain them and they are expelled.

Jesus has a great deal to say on this subject. He cautions us about fruitless thinking about things that cannot be altered, foolish thinking about the things of the past that we should dismiss utterly, but which we keep with us with their depressions and temptations to sin; fearful thoughts of the future that fill us with miserable apprehensions of things that for the most part never come, sorrowful thoughts of sins forgiven that we will not dismiss from our minds, thoughts of past mistakes, all sorts of evil thoughts, profitless thoughts, that we consent to entertain, in our heedlessness, perhaps, of the evils they are doing. As the Apostle says in this text, we ought to select such thoughts as are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

But a man says to me, "I seem not to have any power over my thinking. For

days impure thoughts have filled my mind, absolutely against my will, and much to my pain. Why do such thoughts arise in my mind, and why is it so difficult to expel them?" "What have you been reading?" I asked. And when he told me of his recent mental companions I knew the secret of his unclean thoughts. "You have been putting into your mind the thoughts that come up there." Such thoughts let in through the ear and the eye multiply very fast. If you would free yourself from them you must turn away from all that breeds them—and you must crowd them out of your mind by keeping it filled with pure thoughts.

## XXII

## BARABBAS OR JESUS?[1]

Pilate left it to the people to choose which of these men should be released, and they made their choice knowing well that the death of one meant the life of the other, that to send one to the cross meant to free the other from the experience of that horrible death; And the people unanimously chose Barabbas.

[1] Matt. 27 : 17.

The contrast between these men is the contrast between light and darkness, between the best of men and the worst of men. Every instinct of those who chose Barabbas should have led them to choose Jesus. For his own sake they should have chosen him, since he was entitled to his life, while Barabbas had, by sin, sacrificed his right to live. Jesus was worthy of the life of which Barabbas was unworthy. They should have chosen Jesus for their own sakes, since he was their friend and could bring them into harmonious relationships with God, while Barabbas was one whose influence and example must prove harmful to them if they liberated him and associated with him.

How, under the circumstances, are we to account for the fact that the people chose Barabbas rather than Jesus? Did they do so in ignorance of the character of these two men? No, for they made their choice after both Jesus and Barabbas had made records clearly revealing what they were, after Barabbas had been justly condemned, and Jesus had been tried and declared by Pilate to be without fault.

I emphasize this fact that this choice was made after both men had made their records. For, like them, we are daily

called to choose between all that Jesus represents and all that Barabbas stands for, and these things between which we have to choose have all made their records, which are known to us and should determine our choice of one rather than the other. Selfishness has made its record—a record of crime and pain and death. No good thing can be said of it. It stands convicted as a robber, a murderer of men. It is Barabbas. It ought to die. The world would be turned into a very paradise if it should die. There is no hope of heaven until it does die.

Love, holy love, love such as Jesus embodied, has also made its record, and by its fruits it may be known. There is no evil in it. Even the most cruel Pilate will bear witness to the fact that Jesus is worthy of life. The motive of his life will perfect the race as God is perfect if it should reign in all hearts; And yet just as the people chose Barabbas after they had come to know his record, rather than Jesus whose record they also knew, so men now choose a selfish motive rather than a motive of love; choose to be ruled by their passions rather than by their virtues; choose to be governed by appetites rather than by ideals; choose carnal nature rather

than spiritual nature. We must choose to be ruled by one or the other of these natures, and the choice of one means the death of the other. The Jews chose Barabbas rather than Jesus, because they had come to hate Jesus on account of the restraint he imposed upon them in the exercise of their sinful lusts and unholy passions. Barabbas they knew would not thus restrain them in their sinful living and they chose him because their deeds were evil.

But thanks be to God their choice of Barabbas was not their *final* choice. Many of them soon saw that they had chosen Barabbas in blindness to their own interests, and they reversed their choice. Is it not true of many of you, tonight, that you are prepared to choose the pure and blessed life of the Son of God? He will give Himself to you when you choose Him.

## XXIII

## SAVED FROM WITHIN[1]

"Have salt in yourself." If a man is to be saved, he must have in himself that

[1] Mark 9 : 50.

which shall save him. Being with those who are pure will not make him pure in whose heart an impure motive dwells. A person may remain in increasing selfishness while in the closest possible association with those of growing unselfishness. The change that regenerates a man's conduct must be a change of motive—it is the change that occurs within a man that makes the change in his outer life real and permanent. Hence, the insistence of Jesus upon the new birth of a man's spirit as preceding the change of his life. Have in yourselves that which shall hold in check the corrupt tendencies of your nature; have salt, the salt of God's holy love, for your fellow men in yourselves if you would be saved from sinning against them.

Have light in yourselves. The light of the example of others will mean little to one who has not the light of their lives in his own heart. See things for yourselves, if you would be sure of them. Have the witness of the truth in your own reason and conscience. Do not rest your faith upon external authority but upon your own personal understanding and experience of it. Have a spring of water in yourselves. You cannot satisfy your thirst for God with others' experiences of Him.

You must drink of the water of life fresh from the fountain, if your thirst is to be satisfied, and your spiritual experience must be an abiding one, if it is to be satisfying. Past experiences of God will not satisfy present thirst for Him. Have root in yourselves; "because they had no root in themselves they withered away." We must have a deep, true, abiding faith in God as love if we are to maintain our faith in him against all that would detach us from him. "Rooted in love" means such a faith in love, such a worship of love, such an appreciation of the value of love as makes it impossible for anything past or present or future to separate us from it. We have to cling to love as the roots of a tree cling to the soil, if love is to have its perfecting work in us, protecting us from every temptation and developing in us every grace of God's holy character. We have to make love our one foundation upon which everything in our life rests, if love is to fulfill its perfecting work in us. Oh, that we may have in us this one thing that is salt, light, water, root,—the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## XXIV

## CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR PETER[1]

"I prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Peter believed that he was able to follow Jesus even unto the death. He had not the slight doubt that he would rather die than deny his Master, but Jesus knew better. "Before the cock crows you will deny me thrice." Jesus knew that in the time of trial Peter's faith would be in danger of failing, that after such an experience of weakness in the face of temptation, the Apostle would doubt that he would ever be able to conquer it, that he would lose faith in his ability to fulfill his purpose to follow his Master. This is what Jesus had in mind when he said, "I have prayed that thy faith fail not." He was not thinking of any failure of Peter's faith in him as the Son of God, but of Peter's failure of faith in his own ability to follow his Master, to do the thing that he had tried so long and so often, in vain, to do, that after he had failed, wretchedly failed, in his efforts to follow Jesus, he would lose faith in his power ever to do so. Jesus knew that such loss of faith would prove abso-

[1] Luke 22 : 32.

lutely fatal to his disciple, knew that if he lost his faith that he could follow him, it would never be possible for him to do so. And so Jesus said, "I prayed that thy faith fail not," after you have thrice experienced failure to do what you felt sure you could do. And the Lord's prayer was answered. For Peter's faith that he could yet win out in following his Lord's example did not utterly fail him. Rather, it grew stronger and at last gave him the power he needed to do the thing that he had so often failed in doing, so that he finally gloriously followed Jesus even unto the death of the cross. Jesus knew that Peter could not be saved until he had gone forth in his sin, that he would have to repeat his sin until he came to hate it as he saw its effects upon his Master.

So it is with men whom we are unable to hold up from drink and other evils until they have experienced their misery sufficiently, as they have seen its results in the lives of those who have suffered on account of it, and have experienced it in their own increasing suffering on account of it. But there is hope for a man, no matter how often or how low he may have fallen, so long as his faith does not fail, so long as he believes that he can succeed.

It is a blessed fact that most evil men still believe they can overcome the sin by which they have been thrown. Their repeated failures to overcome have not resulted in their utter loss of faith that they will ultimately conquer. That is a wonderful thing, which we can account for only on the ground that God keeps their faith alive. That is what Jesus meant when He said, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The knowledge that his Master's faith in him had not failed, and that God's faith in him had not failed, and that Jesus in God's name had predicted ultimate success in the thing wherein he had so frightfully and repeatedly failed, helped to keep Peter's faith from failing. Jesus, who had predicted his temporary failure, had also predicted his ultimate success.

What a mighty inspiration it is to a feeble man to know that God believes in him, that the God who knows his weakness also knows His possibilities of so strengthening him against it as to give him the success for which he would otherwise despair. How it does save one, how it does inspire one to believe that he may yet overcome that which has up to this time overcome him, when he knows that God believes that he can overcome it. Remember this, how-

ever, that the man whose faith did not fail was the man whose purpose to follow Christ was sincere. So long as one sincerely desires any good thing of God, his faith in the possibility of its achievement will not fail, however often his weakness may defeat him.

I hope and trust that no drunkard in this congregation has lost all faith that he is to be a sober man, that no dishonest man, however often he may have been overcome by his fault or imprisoned by it, doubts that he can still be an honest man, that no woman whose character has been damaged has lost faith that she can be whiter than snow. I humbly hope and trust and dare to believe that you will yet overcome the temptations that have hitherto overcome you, by the power of the God who is willing to help you and who, because He knows His help will be amply sufficient, has perfect faith that you will yet be made whole.

## XXV

## FATAL IGNORANCE[1]

There is one thing these men did not know and their ignorance proved their

[1] Matt. 25 : 44.

ruin. They did not know that they had neglected to serve God in their neglect to serve men. I say they did not understand this tremendous fact that none of their religious beliefs or forms of worship could give them a particle of fellowship with God so long as they did not serve Him by serving men.

So today there are multitudes of Christians who think they are serving God when they are reading what they regard as His word, or are praying to Him, or are listening to sermons about Him, or are attempting to believe something that is taught to them concerning Him. They imagine that they are in fellowship with God while they are refusing to even so much as look at some of His humble disciples, much less to feed them, visit them, care for them. Their religion can never cleanse or perfect them.

Jesus was always seeking to make men see that they served God only as they served men. Priest and Levite did not see that their worship of God should have been shown by help to the wounded man whom they both passed on their way home from church. Dives did not see that he must serve Lazarus if he would have fellowship with Abraham in his fellowship with God.

The nations at war see nothing inconsistent with their professed worship of God in their fiendish treatment of men and women. Our churches are full of persons guilty of the sin charged against the men of my text who, while they prayed and fasted and observed the outward forms of worship of God, utterly failed to serve God by serving His needy children. Oh, that in some way our pulpits might make this truth known to the world!

## XXVI

## THE EFFECT OF A LOOK[1]

It was wrought by a single look of Christ. "And when the Lord looked upon Peter, he went out and wept bitterly." It was the look of one against whom Peter had sinned without the least possible excuse, the look of one whom Peter's sin had involved in deep suffering. It is not pleasant to look into the face of an innocent loved one who knows that we have been false to his interests, of one who loves us, whose heart we have broken; for a man to look upon a woman whose life he has

[1] Luke 22 : 62.

ruined; for a husband to look into the face of a patient, suffering wife for whose suffering he is responsible; for a son to see the countenance of a mother's look full of suffering, which he knows is the result of his sin of wounding her. Oh! Peter must have thought of the look that Jesus would have had for him that day if only he had been loyal to his Master, the look of tender fellowship and deeply appreciative gratitude, instead of the look of suffering which he had caused.

It is a beautiful thing to live so that our friends look into our eyes with joyful approval, so that they have that look when we see them in picture, or imagination. Oh, the joy we experience when we see in their countenance evidence that we have given them pleasure instead of pain! Peter did not realize how his sin would pain Christ. He did not expect that Jesus would ever be effected by it. So we sin against the innocent, not knowing what they will suffer because of our sin. This is our mistake, as it was Peter's. Like him, we need to see the suffering that our sin has caused innocent hearts, and go out and weep bitterly, unto a deep repentance that shall result in a true conversion. And I am sure that every man here would re-

pent of his sin if only he could see the suffering he has caused those whom he loves. And for that reason I ask you to think of the wives and mothers and others whose hearts are filled with pain when they think of you and of your sins against their love. Oh, while I speak, just now, look in imagination into the faces of those who love you most, who, for that reason, suffer most because of your suffering. Take the pain out of their hearts, filling them with joy instead, by doing what Peter did that night, when he forever forsook the sin that had made the one who loved him most suffer most. Change that pained look of your loved one into a look of joyful approval by giving yourself now to live the love of Christ—the life of love. God grant that the vision of the suffering face of some loved one may just now be used by God to lead you to repentance and life eternal.

## XXVII

## A NEW GOLDEN RULE[1]

We are to deal with men as God has dealt with us. We are to forgive as we

[1] John 15: 9.

have been forgiven. We are to help as we have been helped. We are to love as we have been loved. As freely as we have received from God, we are to give to men. Here is a much more definite rule than the so-called Golden Rule.

Let me illustrate its deep meaning from a recent personal experience. I had to deal with a man who had contradicted my sense of righteousness and truth and love to the very quick. It seemed almost incredible that he should be recovered from his fallen condition. But that morning I had had an experience of an hour alone with God, during which time He had lifted up my ideals and purified my motive and enlightened my mind. I said, "I will spend as much time with my friend as God has spent with me, and I will attempt to do for him what God has done for me." Acting on this rule, it was simply amazing how the man responded as I dealt with him as nearly as I could in the spirit in which I had been dealt with by God. I could see his mind change until a deep, true repentance and faith were there, and then, as I prayed with him, the Spirit of God's love and truth came upon him, with the result that he was converted to God. And since

then he has been reunited with his wife and is a real Christian.

What the Spirit does for us directly, we must let Him do through us for those who need His help. This work cannot be done by us for others in any other way than the Spirit does it for us.

## XXVIII

## WHY PRAYER IS NECESSARY[1]

All of these verses relate to the subject of prayer. In the preceding chapter, Jesus tells His disciples that they must be sincere in their prayers and not like the Pharisees, who pray hypocritically. In coming to God they are not to use vain repetitions, they are to remember that He knows what they need before they ask. Jesus says we are to ask God for His gifts. Why? Because our asking is a sign that we desire what we ask, and that desire opens the door for God's gift. He cannot give to us even what He knows we need, so long as we do not sufficiently desire it. Jesus illustrates this fact in the sixth verse, where he says that we must not give that which is

[1] Matt. 7: 6-12.

holy to dogs, since they have no desire for it, no capacity to receive it, no discernment of its value or its proper use. We should not cast pearls before swine, since they would trample them under their feet and turn again and rend us.

No matter how much a man needs a thing, we cannot so give it to him that it shall meet his need if he does not desire it. It is because asking is an expression of desiring that God gives His spiritual gifts only as we ask them from Him. He cannot force them upon us. If He were to do so we should misuse His gifts and hate Him for compelling us to receive them. So, then, we must ask in faith and earnest desire for the things for which we pray. We must value them sufficiently before God can give them profitably to us. I wonder, oh, I wonder, how much we really do value the gifts of God for which we pray. Let us pause and ask ourselves this question. There is the absolute certainty of our receiving what we need from God when we ask with right desire, when we value it so highly that God can bestow it upon us.

How much do we value the kingdom of God? Really is it to us the pearl of great price, for which we would give all that we possess in exchange? Do we seek fellow-

ship with God as the merchantman sought the precious jewel? When we pray for the Holy Spirit, how much do we desire it? Do we so value it that we would gladly surrender everything that stands in the way of its coming and of its fulfilling its purpose in our lives?

There is no doubt about God's willingness to give good things to His children. If we who are evil will give good things to our children, how much more shall our Father in heaven, who is wholly good, give His Spirit to us? What God is indicates what He wills and what He may be expected to give. If, therefore, He is holy love, there can be no possible ground for doubt that He will give every good thing, every needed thing, to every one of His children who may be in a condition to appreciate His gifts.

I hope I have made perfectly plain to you why it is that petition must always form a part of prayer, why God gives in response to our asking, viz., because our asking is an expression of our desiring, which is a condition of our receiving.

## XXIX

## THE HOUR OF GOD'S OPPORTUNITY[1]

"When my father and mother give me up, then the Lord will take me up." A new interpretation of this text came to me recently in connection with what seemed to be a well nigh hopeless case of a confirmed drunkard. He is a man of intelligence, having many fine points of character, but habitual drinking had become so fixed upon him that all of his people and friends had lost all hope that he would ever permanently escape from it. My own experience of months of fruitless efforts to save him had been such as to make me lose hope also. What can I do in a case where the love of a most devoted and beautiful wife has failed? What hope of success is there now in a case where the efforts for years of loved ones and friends have utterly failed? What hope is there now that the man's will power is weaker than ever, now that his self-respect is seemingly wholly gone, now when everything upon which we based our hope of saving a man seems to have been tested

[1] Ps. 27 : 10.

and failed? What hope is there of success in any further effort that we may make for this man's recovery?

These were about the thoughts that were in my mind when this text came, "Then the Lord shall take him up," meaning that when all others have given a man up and he has no hope of help from any source, he is most likely to give God an opportunity to help him. This is the hour of God's great opportunity, because it is the hour of the man's recognition of his absolute dependence upon God for help.

I say the text took on this new meaning. Formerly, I had supposed it meant that God's love being so much more patient than a father and mother's might be expected to continue after theirs had failed; but now I saw the deeper meaning of the text as I have tried to word it.

I went to the forsaken man and found that for the first time in all my knowledge of him he was in a state of mind to appreciate the love of one who came to him in the name of God. He recognized such love as a love transcending that of his devoted mother and of his devoted wife, and he was ready to believe that it was the love of God in the heart of the person who came to him,

that now offered him help. And the Lord took him up, and he seems a new man.

I call attention to his case as illustrating the meaning of our text, in the hope that others who seek to save the lost will understand that the time when they have most reason to hope for success in such work is when they find a man whom all others have forsaken in hopelessness of recovering him from his sin. When you find a man whose mother and father have forsaken him, believe that you have found a man whom God, through you, may hope to lift up.

## XXX

## PETER MISREPRESENTING JESUS[1]

The profound meaning in the account of the tribute money has been obscured by a single unbelievable feature connected with it. It is a case like that of Jonah and the whale, where the incredible miracle element in the story so takes up the reader's mind as to cause him to entirely lose sight of its great spiritual and moral meaning. It is so with all the miracle stories. The miracle element leads multitudes to cast

[1] Matt. 17 : 24-27.

them wholly aside. "Does not your Master pay the half-shekel?" Peter was asked by a collector of the temple tax, and Peter unhesitatingly answered, "Yes." Peter felt fully prepared to answer this question as to what Jesus would do, *without asking Jesus.* It did not occur to the Apostle that he might misrepresent his Master if, without consulting him, he pledged him to pay the tax in question. He felt that he knew perfectly well what Jesus would say to a question like that. But Peter was mistaken, and, as the result, he misrepresented Jesus' attitude toward the temple tax.

PETER SHOULD HAVE LET JESUS SPEAK FOR HIMSELF. His failure to do so has been repeated in all ages by those who have undertaken to speak for Jesus. They have made Jesus teach what he never referred to, if not what he absolutely denied. Men have answered religious questions in the name of Jesus without any authority from him to do so, and when a little thought concerning his character and mission would have made it impossible that they should misrepresent him by the answers that they have given.

Does your Master pay this tax, Peter? "Yes," replies the thoughtless disciple. Did Jesus do this particular thing or teach

this doctrine? We often answer for him without having the authority of his word, or example, or character, upon which to rest an answer. Oh, if Jesus had been permitted to speak for himself, the world would not be full of misrepresentations of his word and life!

Peter, I say, should have consulted Jesus before answering the question as to what Jesus would do in a case like that of the temple tax. It is a grievous sin against Jesus to attempt to speak in his name concerning matters which he has not spoken about, or in ignorance of what he has said or done that reveals his true answer to the questions involved. Notice the mistake that Peter made when he committed Jesus to the payment of the temple tax. The apostle did not see what that tax represented and therefore he did not know what Jesus' attitude toward it must necessarily be. The tax was for the support of the temple worship. It was for the salvation of the soul of him who paid it. To Jesus, this tax was wholly inconsistent with the fact of his sonship to God. It involved a serious error as to man's relations to the Father. It assumed that he was not related to God as his Son. Jesus brought out this truth by the question—"Oh, thinkest

thou, Simon, the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive tribute, from their sons or strangers, from those in the filial relationship or not?" When Peter had said, "Strangers," Jesus replied, "Then the sons are free."

The teaching of Jesus here is this, that every son of God is free from all obligations that contradict his relationship to God. And the whole temple service did this, and especially the temple tax which was paid to secure the favor of God. All the offerings of the temple, the whole Jewish ritual, was a direct contradiction of the fatherhood of God, and for that reason Jesus felt entirely free from all obligations to support or fulfill it. And this freedom he claimed not for himself only, but for all sons of God, as is evident from his saying, "Then were the sons (not son) free," and when, for another reason, Jesus consented to pay the tax, he charged Peter to pay it for both himself and his Master, indicating that if he was obligated to pay it, so was Peter, but that if he was free from the necessity of paying it, so was his apostle. We may be sure that as Peter misrepresented Jesus when he declared that his Master approved of the temple tax, so we misrepresent him whenever we represent

Jesus as teaching anything that contradicts his and our sonship to God. The Master's word is clear and conclusive that one is to believe and practice only that which is in perfect harmony with his relationship to God as a son.

As I have said, the whole temple service was a denial of this holy relationship. It was consistent with the conception of God as a king to whom man was a subject, but not a son. All sons of God are free to deny all that the church has taught that contradicts that relationship. If Peter had considered the question of the temple tax in the light in which Jesus regarded it, he would have seen, as Jesus saw, that it was a tax that neither he nor his Master was at all required to pay.

Note the difference here between Peter and Jesus with regard to this temple tax, and see why they differed so widely. The man who judges all things in the light of his relationship to God will differ widely in his religious teaching and practice with those who do not take the filial relationship into account! Our theory and morality are certain to be determined by our theology. If man is God's servant, then he is in a relationship to God wholly different in all respects from that in which one is whose

God is his Father. In answering all questions of faith and duty, we should consider them in relation to our sonship to God. I am free from all that contradicts that relationship.

So Christ put aside all the sacrificial ways of getting favor from God; so he came directly to God, not through a priest as a mediator, but as a son. Glorious truth, which we all need to learn, blessed freedom of the sons of God—free from all that contradicts the filial relationship, free to believe and practice all that is in harmony with one's sonship to God.

But while the follower of Jesus will never do evil to gain influence for good, he will abridge his liberty in doing what is entirely permissible when such abridgment of his liberty is essential to the manifestation of his righteous motive. Hence, Jesus said to Peter, Though as a son I am free from all duty to pay the temple tax, yet, under the circumstances, I shall pay it. Only, I want you to know why I pay it,—not as a debt, nor an endorsement of the temple service, but for another and entirely different reason. I shall pay it, not because you, Peter, have said that I would pay it,—for I certainly shall not hold myself responsible to redeem all the

pledges that may be made in my name by those who do not have my authority and are not guided by my Spirit. But I shall pay this tax, lest we cause the Jewish leaders to stumble. They will not understand, they cannot possibly understand, the ground on which we free ourselves from obligation to pay the tax, since they do not know our relationship to God that frees us from the necessity for paying it. The result of their ignorance, therefore, if we act on our freedom, will be an utter misunderstanding of our motive. It will seem to them that we are unwilling to meet a sacred obligation, and that will be made a cause of stumbling to many honest hearts to whom as yet the light of the truth of the filial relationship has not come. We must consider how the refusal to pay the temple tax will seem to those who cannot understand our reason for so doing. Our good will be evil spoken of. We must, for love's sake, therefore, deny ourselves the full liberty of all the privileges of our sonship to God. In living with those who are not in our spiritual relationship to God we have to consider how many things of our freedom would appear to them if we should fully exercise it. We must not let our freedom become a stumblingblock to those

who do not as yet understand its glorious nature.

One who follows Jesus will judge all his obligations in the light of his sonship to God, but he will seek so far as possible not to violate the consciences of those with whom he is associated, who are not themselves in the enjoyment of his relationship to God. He will do many things that he is not required to do, and he will leave undone many things that he has the freedom to do, lest what he does or leaves undone prove a stumblingblock to those whom he wishes to lead into the liberty of his relationship to God.

## XXXI

## MISDIRECTED ZEAL[1]

The sword stroke that severed the ear of Malchus is a case of misdirected zeal of the servants of Christ. Here is a case where a man who took his life in his hands to serve Jesus did more harm than good. What a deep disappointment it must have been to Peter to find that the blow he had struck for his Master had utterly failed of its purpose.

[1] John 18 : 10-11.

Peter was always embarrassing Jesus by his lack of intelligence in his efforts to serve him, by his unintentional misrepresentations of him. We saw that in Peter's obligation of Jesus to pay a tax that Jesus could not pay as a debt. Peter was always making mistakes in his efforts to assist Jesus, and all of these mistakes came from the same cause, Peter's failure to understand the relationship of his Master to God and the nature of his mission in the world. If he had only known the mission of Jesus, it would have been possible for him to have had intelligent fellowship with his Master in all of his teaching and works.

It is pitiful how much has been done by disciples of Jesus that has only served to misinterpret him and to hinder men from seeking and finding his Kingdom. Millions of men have followed the example of Peter in using wrong methods to serve their Master—methods he never used, methods that they would have seen to be the very contradiction of his motive if they had known his motive. It was quite natural that Peter should strike as he did, but it was harmful to Jesus to have him do so. Only harm to the cause of Christ could come from the method Peter used to promote it. Two things Jesus said about

Peter's act. He did not praise his zeal. He did not excuse his mistake. God, Jesus said, has not left me in dependence upon your feeble and utterly fruitless efforts to escape from crucifixion. If it were His will that I escape the mob, God would give me legions of angels. He would not leave me dependent for the fulfilment of His will upon utterly inadequate means. God could protect me if that were His will.

It is thus of the utmost necessity that followers of Christ have a knowledge of the will of God. Then they will be spared the painful experience that came to Peter when he was made to realize that he blindly opposed the will of God in the very thing that he had done to promote it.

And Jesus healed the wound that Peter had made. He undid what Peter had done. How much of such work God has to do in the world! How much of hay, wood and stubble we build on the good foundation. How much of what we teach and practice in the name of Christ contradicts that name! One who follows Christ should be most careful to have the Master's knowledge of the will of God so as to follow him intelligently. And we have all the more need for care in doing this since we cannot expect a miracle to be wrought to correct

the evil result of our mistakes concerning the will of God. If Peter severed the ear of Malchus, Jesus made it clear to Peter and to Malchus and to all who knew of the matter that He surely disapproved of the disciple's act, that so far as he was concerned, he would, if possible, restore the severed ear. The follower of Jesus has much to do in undoing the teaching and example of those who have unintentionally misrepresented the Master. Act always on the motive of love, if you would always represent the Master.

## XXXII

## THE DEVILS IN THE SWINE[1]

There is a spirit of evil in the world as surely as there is a Holy Spirit here. It matters not how this spirit got here or what you call it. Its presence is manifest enough. It is perfectly certain that men are seen to be under its control and often absolutely against their will. While there is a great mystery about this evil spirit, yet there are some things concerning it that are very clear.

First, it is always connected with error

[1] Matt. 8 : 28-34.

in the mind of the person possessed. The spirit of evil is the spirit of darkness, for the person held in bondage to error does not see it as such. He believes it to be true. That is the reason that it has such tremendous power upon his mind. But for his belief in it, it would be absolutely powerless to effect him. Take the case we are considering. This man is tormented by false beliefs. He believes that he is possessed of legions of devils. He did not originate this belief. It had been taught him. How it originated, we do not know. But the fact is clear that the man believed it and therefore had all the torture of his faith that he was possessed of demons.

Then he was tormented by his conception of God, by the idea that he had been given into the hands of devils to be tortured. He had come to take the attitude toward himself that men had taken toward him and that he thought God held toward him. He expected no help from either God or man. When a man gets into that state of mind, his torture is complete, and there are multitudes of such persons in the world.

Then this man was tormented by the thought that death would mean hell, that his torture after death would be greater than he was experiencing, great as that

was. It is no wonder that with such ideas in mind the man was found by Jesus hiding away from men in the tombs, and longing, but fearing, to destroy himself. The wretched condition of this man may be wholly accounted for by the errors concerning God and man that filled and controlled his mind and from which he was utterly unable to escape since he surely believed them. In a word, this man held views of God and man that necessarily involved his madness. How could a man remain sane who believed that God would endlessly torture any of his sons in hell? If men would reveal their beliefs, we should understand their conduct. Then we should see what it is that controls them. Oh, the fearful effect upon men's lives of their false religious beliefs!

Of course the man of our text was not possessed of evil spirits. He was simply possessed of false beliefs; but his beliefs, as I have said, had the same effect upon him as evil spirits would have had, since he believed that he was possessed by such spirits. They were nothing, but his faith in them made them real to him.

What a wonderful change would be wrought in the mental and physical conditions of men if they were freed from all

their false beliefs! What freedom the truth would make from the bondage that error creates! Who can imagine the results if all of our errors were corrected, if all of the evils that have their existence solely in errors were taken away? It is a glorious fact that truth purifies the soul from the errors that create evils which bind men in miseries in the world.

We need not concern ourselves with the miraculous element here. It is like the miraculous element in all the stories of Jesus. It simply mars the value of the story, hiding from most eyes its great spiritual and ethical significance. Let the swine alone. Never mind anything about them whatever. Fix your minds upon the great truth that God saves from evil by saving from error. Thank God we have daily evidence at Church House of the value of that method in our work of saving men from sin.

Let me give a recent illustration, keeping very close to the facts in the case. There was a wild look in her poor countenance as she told me that she had meditated suicide the night before. "But why," I asked; "what were you thinking about at the time?" "Well," she said, "a woman had said to me, 'God must be

against you or you would not be so unlucky as you are'; and another friend had added, 'It is the way you are made up, your disposition, that gets you into so much trouble.' Later, a friend of many years said, 'I can't help feeling that you would have succeeded in escaping much of the trouble that you have had with your drinking husband if you had understood him better and had been wiser in the methods you employed to restrain him.' "

"When I was alone," she said, "and thought of my unpaid rent and store bill and other things of a most depressing nature, I said, what they say is true; God is not concerned for my welfare, neither are those who call themselves my friends, and then I could only think of one way out of it all,—death."

"I have just been writing about a case like yours," I said, and then I told her the story of the Gadarene.

"Yes," she said, "that is what I should have answered if you had asked my name, 'A thousand devils.' "

"Well, let me take them all away, as I am sure I can do in a few minutes." And I did, and I can now see her countenance so full of peace and joy after the great change had been wrought in her mind. How

did I accomplish it? Very easily. "Here," I said, "take this for your rent and this for your other immediate necessities; now, don't thank me; thank God whose spirit of love inspired me to give you the money generously contributed by others. And, now, let me tell you a little about him who seems to be hard upon you. The reason that he has seemed so has been solely because he has not had opportunity to manifest his own loving self to you. It is his spirit in me that ministers to you, and he wants you to understand that you can always feel sure of a measure of his love waiting for you in every time of need, here in Church House."

"I shall not need so much to eat, now that I know I am cared for," she said. In a word, love and truth have full power on earth to cast out the devils of hate and error. Glorious truth!

## XXXIII

## THE PENALTY A MAN PAYS FOR BLINDNESS TO HIS FAULTS[1]

A man who is blind to his own faults exalts himself above others, with the re-

[1] Luke 18 : 11-14.

sult of loss of fellowship with them, and not only with them but with God also. The text emphasizes this fact. The faults to which a man is blind expose him to the criticism and condemnation which he considers unjust. (Matt. 22:11.)

"And when the King came in he saw there a man without the wedding garment." Evidently this man did not realize his unclothed state, for he was speechless when the king said, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having the wedding garment?" And he went and gnashed his teeth when he was denied the feast and cast into outer darkness. It was because he was in darkness concerning his fault that he gnashed his teeth in rage at one whose attitude toward him his fault made necessary.

Men hate one who seeks to correct in them faults *to which they are blind.* Children are not repentant when their parents punish them if they are blind to the faults for which they are punished. Men see neither justice nor wisdom in the providence of God which is designed to purify them from evils concerning which they are ignorant. In a word, we gnash our teeth when we are punished by and for evils to which we are blind, but we kiss the rod

when we see that it comes to correct evils of which we are conscious, and from which we long to be free.

We count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations *if* we know that they are designed to reveal and to correct evils, recognized as such, in our hearts.

If the chastenings of the Lord are to have their intended corrective effect upon us, we must realize our need of them. So long as we are blind to our soul's needs, we shall continue to misinterpret God's merciful dealing with us. It is a mistake to say "not now, but in the coming years we shall read the meaning of our tears," for we need to read the meaning of our tears when they are in our eyes. We need to understand the necessity for the fiery trial *while we are passing through it,* if it is to have its designed purifying effect upon us.

No chastening can be joyous except as we understand its purpose, because of our understanding of the evil in us that it is intended to correct. Look closely into your heart, therefore, with prayer for the light of God's spirit to aid you to discern what there is there that needs correction, so that, as the correcting experience comes to you, you may welcome it and not be embittered by it.

## XXXIV

## ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE [1]

By a double metaphor Paul tells us what love must be to us if we are to comprehend the height and depth, and length and breadth of the love of God. Love must be to us what a sure foundation is to a house, namely, it must underlie our entire life. It must not be a mere ornament of the building, but that part of it with which all other parts are connected. All other ground is sinking sand. No other foundation but holy universal love can be laid upon which to build a perfect character.

And love must be to us what deep, rich soil is to the plant whose possibilities are to be developed.

Only as the soul abides in such love does the soul experience the consciousness of God. The parable of the sower illustrates this. The seed that was not planted in the soil, but was caught away by the birds, utterly perished. This represents all those who are not rooting themselves in love, many of whom vainly imagine that without so doing they can hope to know the fullness of God.

Then there is the seed rooted in the sur-

[1] Eph. 3 : 17-19.

face soil, which withered as soon as the sun beat upon it. The heat that would have developed it, if it had been deeply rooted, caused it to wither away, because it had little soil. What an illustration of the fruitlessness of the effort that a man makes who attempts to live the life of God without dwelling in His love.

Then there is the seed more deeply rooted in soil in which tares also grew up with it and choked it, representing one whose heart is only partly set upon the things of God; one who seeks to unite the love of God with the love of that which is a contradiction to the will of God. Lastly we have the seed rooted in soil in which nothing else is permitted to grow.

Rooted and growing in such love, the soul develops in all the graces of God, and at last knows all the fullness of the divine nature.

"Rooted and grounded in love"—dwell on these words day after day until their deep meaning is fixed in your life. "Rooted and grounded in love"—fulfill this double metaphor, if you would realize a growing and perfecting vision of God.

I know of no text in which the way to gain full fellowship with God is more clearly set forth.

## XXXV

## WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?[1]

"What do ye more than others?" This is a soul-searching question. It must have startled the disciples of Jesus, who seemed not to have known that he would expect more from them than from others who were not his disciples.

What should we, who are disciples of Jesus, do more than others? Jesus answers this question, "For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?"

If when we are smitten on one cheek and we do not turn the other, if when we are required to go a mile we do not go another, if we are courteous only to those who are courteous to us, if we go no further than the practice of exact justice, what sign is there in us of any relationship to God such as Jesus manifested in his life on earth?

This is the thing that we are to do more than others: "Love your enemies. Bless those that curse you and pray for them

[1]Matt. 5: 27.

which despitefully use you and say all manner of evil against you falsely." In a single word, this love for our enemies is the one thing that we are to do which distinguishes us as children of God. "Love your enemies that ye may be children of God." We are to think of them lovingly, speak of and to them lovingly, and our love for them is to find expression also in deeds as well as words. Jesus practiced this "much-more-than-others" teaching, and he expects us to do the same. Until we do, we shall not be able to escape from our own sins, nor can we contribute anything toward the work of taking away the sin in the world. It is by doing this one thing "more than others" that we are to fulfill our mission in correcting the evils of our humanity.

"I want to love my enemy, and have prayed that I may do so, but thoughts of the wrong he has done me stand in the way. I can go so far as not to will him any harm, but to think of him lovingly, I cannot do that. If he should confess his fault and do all in his power to make good the damage he has done me, my feelings toward him might change, but to love him until he does this is beyond my power. I have prayed for strength to fulfill the com-

mandment of Jesus, but it has never come." "It will help you," I said, "to love your enemy, if you remember the worst thing you have ever done, and the best thing he has ever done. See yourself at your worst and see him at his best. I imagine you reverse this, with the result that you think of yourself as right and your enemy as wrong."

I have recently had an experience of what I am teaching you. I had an enemy in one who was seeking to do me serious damage. He had already involved me in much pain, and my heart was becoming fixed in an attitude of bitterness toward him, from which I am sure I never should have escaped if I had not availed myself of the way I am now opening up to you. I fixed my mind on a real service which he did me and which I had forgotten. I spoke to him and to others of that service, with the result that my words of appreciation of the good thing he had done for me, moved him to render me fresh services of love, with the result, again, that my heart was filled with love toward him and the disagreeable thing was forgotten. Since then he has made me feel his deep repentance and has asked for an assurance of my forgiveness.

If you are a husband and your wife has wronged you, call up memories of all her words and deeds of love. Set these over against the evil things. Tell her that you remember them with appreciation. Do this especially in connection with your thought of her, and you will experience a radical change of attitude toward her, which will bring to pass a change of her attitude toward you, which is likely to result in a reconciliation.

In an hour when your friend wrongs you, remember all of his deeds and words of love, and the result will be that your love for him will remain unchanged. Do not forget to consider your own shortcomings when you think of his. Try my teaching, and see if it does not prove itself true.

## XXXVI

## THE MOTE AND THE BEAM[1]

Here is a text that I imagine has never had a chance to exert one half of its power over us. I want to tell you what it has done for me in hope that you will use it for a like purpose. It is too valuable to

[1] Matt. 7: 1-5.

be wasted. It can help you in a time of need when other helps fail. It has in it the power of God unto the salvation of every one who obeys it. And it does its mind-changing work rapidly. Under its power I have seen a soul released in a half hour's time from an evil mental state in which it seemed to be absolutely imprisoned.

"Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." If we judge unjustly, we shall be unjustly judged. If we judge without mercy, without mercy we shall be judged. Therefore, before we judge another, we should judge ourselves. If we do this it will make a world of difference in our judgment of others. Before you judge anything in any one, be sure and judge yourself concerning the same thing. See the change wrought in the Pharisees in their attitude toward the woman whom they were ready to condemn to death as long as they were unmindful of their own sins. What a change in their attitude toward her was caused by their vision of their own sins. They could not continue to condemn her after their attention had been fixed upon their own forgotten sins.

Take the same attitude toward others

who have your fault that you want others to take toward you. How sensitive you are about your own faults. How you hate to admit them to yourself, much less confess them to others! Remember that others feel the same way about their faults as you do about yours.

I am afraid that you will not practice what I am teaching; that you will not consider your own fault before you consider the faults of others; that you will not admit your own faults before you ask them to admit their faults; that you will not condemn and forsake your own faults before you ask them to condemn and forsake their faults. I am very much afraid that you may be Pharisaic in this matter of condemning in others what you have overlooked in yourselves. Therefore, I entreat you not to pass my words by lightly, not to forget that they are given in interpretation of the words of Jesus, and that they point out a solemn duty, which you cannot neglect without disastrous results. Your whole attitude toward others will become helpful when you practice this teaching.

If England and Germany were each to follow this rule of Jesus they would both be brought into such an humble and just state of mind as would make reconciliation

and a permanent peace possible, but as long as they see only each other's faults, their attitude toward each other will be unjust. If each one of the warring nations should first consider its own faults, there would be nothing left in the way of establishing harmonious relations between them all. For God seems to have so arranged it that the fault is never all on one side, making it necessary that one side should have to confess itself wholly at fault. What a blessed thing it is we are spared the necessity of humbling our enemy by the necessity of having to admit ourself partly at fault. It seems to me that the whole world would be redeemed if it should practice the simple teaching of this single text.

## XXXVII

## THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM[1]

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! Yea, saith the Spirit, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Whether the writer of these words intended them to mean what they do to me or not, I do not know. Neither does that matter. They suggest to me the very im-

[1] Rev. 14 : 13.

portant thought that we are to leave behind us when we die, works in which we shall have pleasure or pain, works through which we shall bless or injure those who are affected by them.

The best illustration of my thought is in the story of Dives and Lazarus, where the rich man realizes that he has left behind him in the world an example of evil, by which those dearest to him are most imperiled. "Send Lazarus to my five brothers that they come not to this place of torture," he prayed. "If they follow my example they will share my misery. I cannot now warn them of their peril, as I now realize it. I cannot correct the example of selfishness which I have left behind me." That is a thing that a man cannot do after death. Whatever change may come to him then cannot in the least change the record of his life. He cannot correct his example. He has opportunity to do so up to the last conscious moment of his life, but that opportunity goes forever when death comes.

What joy men have after death as they realize that they corrected their evil examples before they died, so that whoever remembers their sin remembers also that they repented of it.

I entreat you all to do what Dives

neglected to do, for it must be a very sad thing for a man to realize that he has left a record of evil in the world, by which his evil influence is being perpetuated. I cannot think of a sadder experience than that —for a mother to see her children led astray by her evil example, while she is not able to correct it. Don't take the chances of such an experience. Correct your record at once. Confess your fault wherever it is known, that its evil influence may be arrested; and multiply good works, in memory of which you shall have pleasure, both in this world and in the world to come, as you see the good that your works do, especially to those who love you most and who therefore take them as their example.

## XXXVIII

## OUR FAULTS OUR BURDENS[1]

The Apostle is right in connecting our faults and our burdens; for our faults are our burdens. They, more than our diseases, or our poverty, weigh our spirits down. The more we long to be perfect, the more our faults burden us and not only us, but those who love us. How the faults of

[1] Gal. 6 : 1-2.

their children burden parents and how the faults of husbands and wives and others living in close social relationships burden one another!

The more we love those with whom we are associated, the more we suffer on account of our faults and theirs as these faults disturb the harmony and joy of our relationships. When we overtake men in their faults, what should be our attitude toward them? In that hour we must consider ourselves lest we be tempted, for we are never more severely tempted than when we overtake others in their faults. If they are our friends and we love them, we are tempted to make light of their faults. If they are our enemies, we exaggerate their faults.

It is an extremely difficult thing for a man to take a just attitude toward any one whom he has overtaken in a fault. The Apostle clearly indicates the one purpose that is to determine all that we do and say toward those whose faults we have come to see. "Restore such an one." That must be our attitude, determining our every method.

Two incidents from the life of Jesus will sufficiently illustrate this subject. When he overtook the woman taken in sin, his

attitude toward her was determined by his purpose to restore her to the life of purity from which she had fallen; while the attitude of the Pharisees was one of utter condemnation. The other illustration is in the case of the tree overtaken in the fault of fruitlessness. "Cut it down! Why cumbereth it the ground?" men said who had no thought of recovery for the fruitless tree. "Dig around it, enrich the soil," he said, whose one thought was to restore the fruitless tree.

No matter what a man's fault may be, or however hopeless his recovery from it may seem when we overtake him in it, we are to have hope of his recovery from it, and are to use every possible means to attain that end.

## XXXIX

## HELPFUL MEMORIES[1]

"Do this in memory of me." "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." I do not know all that Jesus meant by these words, but I do know what they suggest to me. I seem to hear Jesus saying to his disciples, "You will need to

[1] Luke 22 : 19; Matt. 28 : 20.

do something to keep yourselves from forgetting me. You say that will never be possible, that I mean so much to you that I shall ever be in your thought, but memories fade and after I have been away from you in the world beyond death for a time, you will forget me unless you do something by which to remember me." The disciples might have said, "But have you not said that you will be with us in Spirit, as one alive after death?" "Nevertheless," Jesus said, "you will not so realize my presence as to abide under my influence unless after my death you do something in memory of me; it is only as you keep in memory of me that you can hope to remain under the influence of my Spirit. I will be with you to the end of the world if you continue to do this thing that shall keep memory of me fresh before your minds."

What is true of Jesus is true of all other departed ones, under whose gracious influence we wish to linger. "Would God," we say, "they were still with us in the flesh, for we do so need the help that came to us from association with them when they were here." It seems cruel that they have been taken away from us, but they are still with us, and we may have the certainty of their influence upon us, if we will but do

something that shall keep us in fresh remembrance of them. It is only through such remembrance of them that they can continue with us, exerting their influence over us as in the days when they were in the flesh.

My own mother had largely died out of my life, with the sad result of loss of her holy influence upon me, when, in remembrance of her I placed her picture over my desk, and set aside a part of my prayer hour for thought of her, and now she is alive from the dead to me. I am under her influence as in the days gone by. I do not hear her audible voice, but I do hear the still small voice in my soul.

"Spend a little time in thought of your mother," I said to a poor distressed soul who could not pray to an unseen God. "Do something every day that shall remind you of her sufficiently to bring you under her influence again and you will be mightily helped in your struggle to become like her."

How rich is the experience of helpfulness that comes to me as I read something, or remember something, that brings me in contact with such men as Frederick W. Robertson, Bishop McVicker, Bishop Brooks, and other great souls who have

lived in the world and left a record full of inspiration for those who come in contact with them through memory of their words and deeds. Because of our failure to remember loved ones we are suffering fearful loss of a love that might still be ours.

There is also hope for you, men and women, whose memory of mothers, or fathers, or wife, or children, is not such as to strengthen your souls; for whoever has done the will of God, which is the will of love, and left a record of his deeds in the world, may be your mother or father. You can fill your heart with their thoughts, though they were not related to you, even though you may never have seen them in the flesh and so come under their influence. It seems to me that many persons consumed of thirst for love are passing these nearby wells and going out into the desert where they search in vain for water.

## XL

## FAITH IN GOD TRIUMPHANT OVER EVERY POSSIBLE DIFFICULTY

I want to tell you of three men in whom we see faith in God triumphant over every

difficulty. It mightily helps us to know that these men were able to maintain their faith in a righteous God under circumstances that tested it to the quick. It will never be harder for us to keep our faith in God than it was for them to keep their faith in Him.

There is the case of Job, whose faith in God was tested first by his loss of all the property which he had honestly acquired. First *men* robbed Job of a part of his property and then nature destroyed the rest. When the loss came through men it did not tempt Job to doubt the justice of God, but when his property was destroyed by nature, God seemed unjust. But Job's faith did not waver. Then followed the loss of all Job's children, overwhelming Job with keenest grief. Their death seemed cruelly unjust. It was impossible that the blame should be placed on them, or on any other human being, since their death was caused by a tempest which overthrew the house where they were. But though God had taken all of his children, still Job blessed Him.

And then Job's health was taken; he was smitten with a most loathsome disease. But though his life had thus been made a burden to him, still Job's faith in God re-

mained unshaken. Last of all, his wife tempted Job to give up his effort to harmonize his unjust and cruel experiences with his faith in the justice and love of God. "The thing cannot be done," she said.

A God who would permit one of his most faithful children, one who was upright above all others, to be robbed of property, children and health, leaving him in a state of torture of body and mind, while he permits the worst of men to retain their property, children and health, is a God who is unworthy of reverence or love. "Curse him!" Job's wife said.

Others attempted to justify God's dealings on the ground that Job must have been guilty of secret sins deserving such punishment as had come upon him. Job knew that his sins did not explain his losses and sorrows. He saw no way of justifying God's dealings. He could not understand how a good God could permit such unjust things to happen to him. But without such knowledge he maintained his trust in God, believing that ultimately God could and would make the matter plain to His servant.

Notice some things which enabled Job to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust

Him." First he knew that it would mean death to curse God. It is a fact that life is not worth living to the godless men. He may have all else without faith in a loving God; but without God he is without life. Curse God and you die.

"The destruction of this sublime conception," said John Fiske, speaking of faith in God, "would be like depriving a planet of atmosphere; it would leave nothing but a moral desert as cold and dead as the savage surface of the moon."

"Are force and matter all? The rest a dream?" asks Henry Van Dyke. "The world in which we live and move is meaningless; no Spirit here to answer to our own; the stars without a guide; the chance-born earth adrift in space. No captain on the ship; nothing in all the universe to prove eternal wisdom and eternal love. And man, the latest accident of time, who thinks he loves and longs to understand; who vainly suffers and in vain is brave; who dupes his heart with immortality. Man (without God) is a living lie—a bitter jest upon himself, a conscious grain of sand, lost in a desert of unconsciousness, thirsting for God, and mocked by his own thirst."

In the same strain F. W. Robertson

wrote: "It is the one, almost the only struggle of religious life to believe that God is love. In spite of all the seeming cruelties of this life; in spite of the clouded mystery in which God has shrouded Himself, in spite of pain and the stern aspect of human life, and the gathering of thicker darkness and more solemn silence round the soul as life goes on, simply to believe that God is love, and to hold fast to that, as a man holds on to a rock with a desperate grip when the driving waves sweep over him and take his breath away, I say that is the one fight of Christian life, compared with which all else is easy. When we are not sure of the heart of God, the heart sours and life itself drags on, a mere death in life."

To know God is life eternal, to deny God or curse Him is death eternal. No doubt Job held on to his faith in God because he realized his desperate need of Him.

Another thing helped Job to maintain his faith in God—"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Job put these two things together. When he thought of the one he thought of the other also. He did not overlook the bow in the cloud. He thought of what God had given in connection with

thoughts of what He had taken. He gave the property, children and health, then He had taken away. "I should never have had them but for His goodness."

We are apt to forget the gifts of God when we think of our losses. It would greatly help us to maintain our faith in the justice and love of God if, when He is permitting us to have bitter experiences, we were to think of the evidences of his goodness. For one look at the desert take a hundred looks at the garden. For one thought that pains, you may have a hundred thoughts that give pleasure. If there are things in nature that weaken your faith, there are many more that can strengthen it. Job was wise in remembering that God gave all the good things that He had taken away.

And then another thing that helped Job to maintain his confidence in God was his faith that God would finally justify to him all of His dealings with him. "Though worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The book of Job ends with the restoration of Job of all good things that God had permitted to be taken from him. If God gives and takes away we may be sure that it is only that he may restore what he has taken in some richer

form or degree. One who believes this finds it easy to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

## XLI

## LET GOD BE TRUE[1]

"Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

"I have fought the fight, I have kept the faith," Paul said. The Apostle had had to fight to keep his faith in the love and justice of God. Like Job, the Apostle had suffered the loss of all those things upon which he had set his heart. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And yet none of these afflictions disturbed Paul's faith in God, since he believed that they

[1] Rom. 3 : 4.

were all needed to work out the loving purpose of God concerning him. "None of these things moved me."

Like Job, Paul dwelt upon the good things which God had given him, and he believed that the future would make clear to him many of the providences of God, which he now saw as through a glass darkly. The one thing above all others that kept Paul's faith in God unshaken was the belief that God was in Jesus. He was persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things of the past, present or future would be able to separate him from the love of God in Jesus Christ. And the Apostle felt sure that the Spirit of God that was in Jesus was in him also. It was this personal experience of God, that Paul shared with Jesus, that kept Paul's faith in the love and justice of God from failing.

## XLII

## UNTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT

"Unto thy hands I commit my spirit." Dying on a cross, suffering cruel torture most unjustly at the hands of men, Jesus seems to have felt for a moment that he

was forsaken of God. But he quickly overcame this feeling and died with the words of the text upon his lips, "Unto thy hands I commit my spirit." I implicitly trust my father's justice and love in this hour when both are seemingly utterly contradicted. Though my experiences seem to be unwarranted they shall not weaken my trust in God.

Jesus believed that all of nature's cruelties, as well as all the cruelties of men, were permitted by God for a purpose of love; that not a sparrow fell without his notice, and that the very hairs of the heads of his children were all numbered. And Jesus was perfectly willing to suffer and to have others suffer all that was necessary in order that the evil of the world be taken away. When evil apparently triumphed, Jesus was not disturbed because he fully believed that all such triumphs must prove postponed victories for righteousness. He looked beyond the monetary triumphs of evil to its ultimate and eternal defeat. He knew that if men took from him anything which God had given to him, God would see to it that it was restored to him, and with wonderful interest. It was that Job-like assuredness that God's righteousness and love were at the heart of all things which

enabled Jesus to maintain his faith in God and his love to the very end.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." "Let God be true but every man a liar." "Father, unto thy hands I commit my spirit." Let the faith of these words dwell in our hearts.

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